



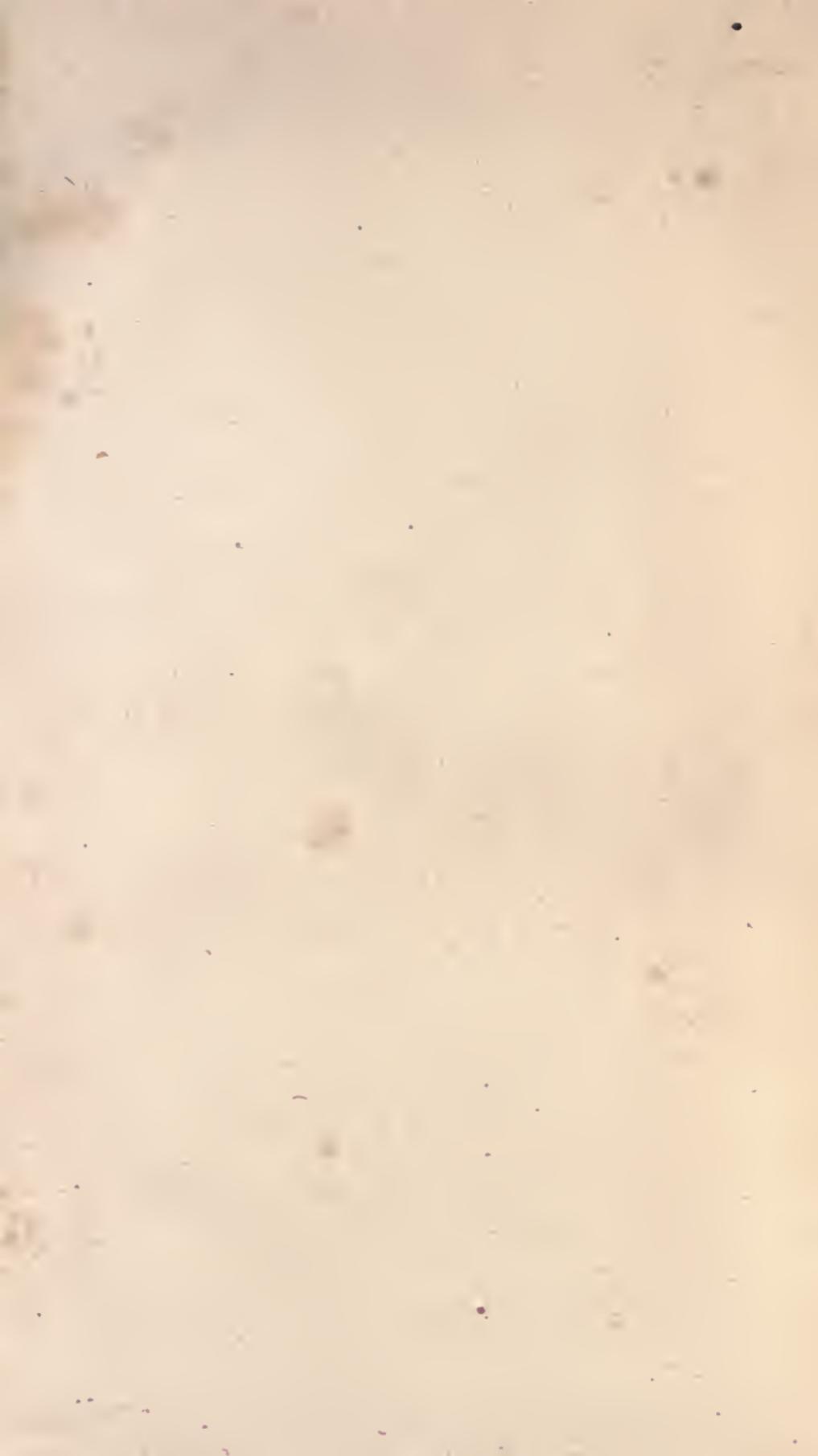
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LOOKING FOR DIRECTIONS.

See page 26.

THE
RAINBOW SIDE:

A Sequel to "The Itinerant."

BY MRS. C. M. EDWARDS.

FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

THIRD THOUSAND.

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P R E F A C E.

Not long ago I offered to my friends a small work entitled the "Itinerant; or, Rainbow Side," in which I gave a promise to continue my illustrations of the itinerant system in a sequel to the work.

It is in redemption of that promise that I have prepared the present volume. I do it with many misgivings, from the fact that the subject has been skillfully handled in a work that has but recently appeared. We have no wish to mislead the public mind respecting this work; we do not profess that it is a veritable history of any particular individual, but rather a collection of isolated but real incidents into a continuous narrative.

Should it serve to encourage any saddened spirit, or establish any wavering heart, or

awaken holy emotion in any bosom, the author will feel that she is doubly repaid for her labor.

With these sentiments we offer it to the East Maine Conference, respectfully dedicating it to the Rev. W. Marsh, one of her most faithful servants, to whom it is affectionately subscribed.

THE AUTHOR.

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R A I N B O W S I D E.

CHAPTER I.

What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.—

MATTHEW xix, 6.

It was an ordinary marriage ceremony. The minister had often repeated its forms just as he did then, unless, indeed, there was an unusual trembling and depth to his voice, which was always deep and solemn.

It was no proud alliance of ancient and noble houses; no princely estates of broad lands were to be united, which, in justice, should be divided and sub-divided; no blending of honors and distinctions with which man delights to honor his fellow-man, hoping that by fortune's caprice it may be rendered to him again.

No! none of these; nor had keen calculation in any way overruled the matter. The parties were young, yet mature in strength and beauty. Each had been satisfied with the solitary duties and interests of the past; each had loved and trusted as friends love and trust. Their hearts had welled and overflowed with affection even while the hidden depths were all untroubled.

After the ceremony came the bridal greetings; and as the friends approached, taking the trembling hand of the bride, and with their lips touched her blushing cheek, her heart was very full. It was all happiness, and yet it seemed to be rising toward the channel devoted to grief. It needed but one more friendly hand to make the brimming vessel overflow. It came from the hand of the white-haired host, who, not content with the greeting bestowed by others, wound his sturdy arm about the bride, and pressed her to his broad bosom, saying to the young husband, "Look here, brother."

The young husband bowed and smiled, then

placing his hand in that of the old gentleman, he thanked him for all his love and care for his beloved; while she, the little lady, seemed to think a gayly-flowered vest, worn by the old gentleman in honor of the occasion, a precious receptacle of tears.

Ah, gentle one, lie lightly and confidingly on that fatherly breast, for not in the wide world is there a more faithful bosom. And when in after life there come cares thou canst not divide, and trials thou mayest not add to the burdens of thine other self, think of this friend, and for *his* sake think better of the world.

We may not linger if we would keep pace with the bridal party, for ere the bride had dried her tears the coach came rattling to the door, and a warning tinkle was heard from the bell in the distant hall.

“And where do you reside, sir? I have forgotten your address,” said the hostess as she gave her hand to the bridegroom at parting.

“Reside, Matey?” responded the host; “why, don’t you know that they are going into all the

world, to preach the Gospel to every living creature?"

The lady said "O, indeed!" and hoped they would have a pleasant journey.

The city paper for that day had the following notice: "Married this morning, by the Rev. Mr. Donald, Mr. Walter Willard to Miss Maria Ray, adopted daughter of Captain Hargrave, of this city."

The old gentleman read the notice many times, then cutting it from the paper, hid it in the pocket of the wedding vest, saying: "I will keep this that I may be sure the child is married."

Away rolled the lumbering stage-coach, leaving in the distance the bustle and din of city life. The bride looked at the tall spires, the broad-faced clocks, and the distant vessels. Mechanically she read the signs as she passed, not from interest, but as a parting tribute. The shop-boys, as they swept the walks, glanced at the carriage and the pretty lady at the window. Soon, however, they were all passed.

Shops became few and far between; familiar scenes disappeared; the sun rolled up higher and hotter, drying the dews from the face of the earth, so that the horses raised a cloud of dust; and yet onward they go, over hills, through valleys, in view of green fields, broad rivers, shady groves, humble cottages, and lordly mansions; on they go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature.

But first they were to meet their brethren at Conference, and receive their appointments. Mr. Donald and Mr. Willard sat on the front seat, and conversed of their last year's trials and blessings, and the general prosperity of their respective stations; while the ladies occupied the back seat, and conversed together as sisters do.

Two fat men, redolent of bar-room perfumery, divided the party through the journey, and gave to it rather an amusing variety. They talked of the weather, the last hard winter, the rise of stocks, the fall of lumber, prospects of crops, etc. Such discussions occupied

the morning. After dinner the social thermometer seemed on the rise. The gentlemen became patriotic, praised our country and its institutions, lauded the government, and foretold (O how truly!) even greater things than these. At last, after a few more friendly calls at inns, post-offices, etc., they grew eloquent in defense of the Church, and that liberality that permitted them to sit under their own vines and fig-trees, (they might have added, distilleries and brandy casks,) with none to molest or make them afraid.

Onward moved the carriage, the wheels rattling and jolting as though they were proof of their speed, and onward glided the silent hours, until, together, they brought the travelers to their destination.

CHAPTER II.

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.—1 TIMOTHY iii, 1.

THE Conference held its session in the village of S. There was a general gathering of the ministry. The weather was fine, the roads excellent, the air pure and invigorating, and there was on each countenance an expression of gladness and hope.

As Mrs. Willard entered the old church with her party she glanced round for some other familiar countenance, but none met her wandering eye. As the services had not commenced, she interested herself in the greeting of others. How ready their recognitions! How hearty their salutations! What eloquent smiles and tears! With what affectionate earnestness they gathered round an aged veteran and his care-worn companion. Mrs. Willard (or Maria, as she was called by her friends)

heard an old gentleman say, with a trembling voice: "My children in the Gospel," and the words seemed to her like a "chronicle of events." Then came a hush through the various groups as the bishop was ushered into the altar. In holy awe he knelt in silent prayer, while every head was bowed. Then came the opening of Conference, singing and prayer, and soon the sacramental bread and wine were distributed. There were tears, and sabbings, and suppressed shoutings as the holy elements were received, and each felt the power of an invisible Christ imparting strength to his aspiring soul.

"In remembrance of me!" How precious the thought, and how full of meaning! Not in memory of earth's storms and trials, of outward fightings and inward fears, of faltering faith and wearied hope, but in memory of *Me*, their gracious and all-powerful Saviour, who by his care and love had brought them through the whole. O how much pride, and discontent, and murmuring, and selfishness, and worldly hankering were carried away with that inward

baptism, and how much gratitude was felt in some hearts that had well-nigh proved recreant to their trust. Alas for the brother that can bow with his brother at the sacramental board, and go away with wrath and bitterness against him!

Maria bowed with the rest at the altar of her God, and as she received the precious tokens of his love, her heart was strengthened and encouraged. "O," thought she, "what a band of brothers through the precious blood of adoption, by which we all become members of the same family!" and she prayed for strength and wisdom, and a holy consecration to the new work for which she felt so insufficient.

When the services and business of the morning had closed, Mr. Willard brought his friends and presented them to his wife. Maria hardly knew whether to smile or weep, they were all so kind and brotherly; she was beginning to feel a little giddy from the press of the crowd, when a new voice at her side made her listen.

"Come, come brother Willard," it said in a

bustling manner, "present me to your lady, and let me take you both away before she is overwhelmed with greetings."

Maria just heard the name of Wingate, when with hands, smiles, and tears, she received her husband's friend. Mr. Wingate was as good as his word; he took them to the hospitable home he had reserved for them, and through the conference week Maria enjoyed the pleasure and profit of Mrs. Wingate's society. Speaking of her afterward, Maria said: "She is a perfect model of an itinerant's wife."

The entire services of the Conference were of great interest to Maria. For the first time she learned the great work in which her people were engaged; for the first time did she truly feel that the Church was the "light of the world." With the deepest interest she watched the development of principles and opinions on the various moral topics of the day. Her heart swelled with gratitude and conjugal pride to see and hear that her husband was a strong advocate for truth and right.

At length the closing day arrived. The business had all been harmoniously adjusted ; there had been much of pleasure and profit on the occasion, and hearts had been cheered by glorious tidings from different parts of the Gospel field. One beloved brother had entered into his rest, leaving a precious charge to his fellow-laborers in the Gospel. They had embalmed his memory with their tears in the records of the Church.

Nothing remained but to assign to each of those devoted soldiers a post of duty, and permit them to depart. The bishop arose, and addressed the Conference, exhorting the preachers to a daily consecration to God, patience, cheerfulness, and an entire devotedness to the work of the ministry.

Then came the reading of the appointments. In spite of the bishop's exhortation, Maria saw on the countenances of several of the sisters an anxious and expectant look, as though there were some undisciplined hearts. In her interest for such she forgot her husband's appointment ;

but made amends by remembering that of Brother Donald and Brother Wingate.

“What shall I do without you and sister Ellen?” said Maria to the former as they were about leaving; “I am such a little simpleton, you know.”

“O no, sister, not quite that,” said Brother Donald encouragingly, as he took her hand, “Simple we will allow you to be, and it is because you are so that I can trust you. Be yourself, Maria, and with what God and experience will do for you, you cannot fail.”

Mr. Willard and wife were to go to their destination in their own carriage, which had been sent from his last circuit. Just as they were about to depart Brother Wingate came up to say a few more last words.

“Don’t forget,” said he, “to inquire for Sister Wright the first thing. You will find her home a haven of repose after your journey. Farewell brother, farewell sister. Be strong, and God will bless you.”

“Well, that is really funny,” thought Maria,

as she recalled the parting words of those two beloved brethren. "One says, 'Be yourself, Maria; and the other says, 'Be strong,' which is not at all like myself. May be that is what God will make me if I trust in him, but now it is such a comfort to be weak and have so many friends to love."

Maria wondered what her companion was thinking of so long. She looked round in his face. Mr. Willard smiled, and said he was waiting for her to speak.

"I am so glad," she replied, "that we don't go by stage. Are you not happy that we are going home in this nice carriage? But what makes you smile, Walter?"

"To hear you say *home*, Maria."

"Why, we have a home somewhere, Walter, have we not?" asked Maria with a slight blush.

"Yes, our home is in this carriage, which, with the horse and each other, is all our own."

"And I am sure it is a beautiful home, and a happy one, too," said Maria with earnestness.

"I was thinking this morning how strange it is that when good people have so much trouble I have so many blessings."

Mr. Willard looked upon the happy countenance by his side, from which was reflected so much gratitude, love, and trust, and inwardly prayed that never a shadow from his own faithless heart might fall upon her spirit.

The journey was very pleasant. Each related incidents of their former lives. Heretofore they had had to bear burdens and trials alone which now could be shared and divided. When weary of conversing they listened to nature's harmony, and through that their spirits communed together.

CHAPTER III.

While ye have the light believe in the light, that ye may be children of the light.—JOHN xii, 36.

“This is the S—— River, Maria,” said Mr. Willard, as on the evening of the second day they crossed an old dilapidated bridge.

“But where are the people?” asked Maria. “I see no houses.”

“We shall find some soon. But here are two roads.”

Here was a dilemma. One of the roads led to the village near which was the home of Sister Wright, and the other led Mr. Willard did not know where, and the worst of it was he did not know one from the other. There were no houses in sight, and no persons within hearing. The voice of a solitary bird in the straggling trees, mingled with that of the rolling river, was just becoming lonely, when Maria spied an old guide-board, almost hidden

by a neighboring tree. Like some human guides, it was leaning one way and pointing another, and, as with them, Mr. Willard found its precept better than its example, inasmuch as it directed to the village whither they wished to go.*

“Four miles,” said Walter, stepping back into the carriage; “we shall hardly get there by dark. I fear you are tired, Maria.”

Maria answered cheerfully that she was comfortable, and enjoyed riding in the cool of the evening. She then tried to draw her husband into conversation, knowing how much more quickly the time would pass; but all in vain; his mind was absent—gone ahead to prepare the way for his companion, for whom he was feeling anxious and depressed.

And here, perhaps, it would be well to inform our readers (taking for granted that they have read his history in the “Itinerant”) that Walter Willard had brought to this late period his desponding tone of mind. He had come

*See Frontispiece.

to be beloved and respected in conference as a brother of warm heart and a clear head. His talents were of the first order, and his success equal to that of the most successful; yet in spite of all that he had attained, and all the faults that he had outgrown, there was left a little remnant of his old nature, deplored, prayed against, and yet cherished as the apple of his eye.

Perhaps we are severe in this assertion, for the good man really believed that he had received for answer to his agonizing prayers, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Certain it was he needed grace to bear his borrowed troubles, however light his real ones might be.

Any one would acknowledge it rather a dubious position to be traveling on a misty evening in a strange country, with a young bride, a weary horse, and depending for entertainment on the hospitality of unknown friends. Such a picture was dark enough, and yet Mr. Willard leaped from that into a darker one of his own imaginings. He fancied the friends they sought

might be absent, the house deserted, and Maria, poor little lady, uncared for and weeping. His fancy dwelt on the picture; again and again he went over it, touching it here and there with a deeper shade.

The young wife for whom he was taking so much trouble sat all unconscious of it. He had wrapped the warm shawl about her, and she was quite happy. What though he was silent? wasn't he a minister, accustomed to thoughtfulness? She must learn not to disturb him. And so Maria went off into a train of musings, having for her companions old friends and old scenes. That it was a pleasant trip was evident, for just as her husband had got the picture adorned with that horror of all husbands, a sobbing wife, he was startled by a light carol at his side, and recalled to the realities of his situation.

“Maria,” said he, “were you singing?”

“Perhaps I was,” she replied; “Sister Ellen says I think in that way.”

“Of what were you thinking?”

"Of a night as dark and damp as this, when Brother Donald made us go to meeting on foot with him."

"Didn't you wish to go?" asked Mr. Willard.

"I think we were a little lazy. It was a time of revival, and we had a great many meetings. It being rather dark and muddy, Ellen and I decided to stay at home. To be nice and cosy, we had wheeled up the sofa, set out the stand, and let down the curtains, when in came Brother Donald, swinging his lantern. He had been to the barn to look to his lame horse, and he glanced at his wife as comically as if he understood our whole plan. 'Come, girls,' said he; 'get on your rubbers.' 'I think, husband,' she replied, 'Minnie and I will stay in this evening, it's so damp,' and we both sat up very straight, and tried to look wise and prudent. Brother Donald didn't heed us a bit, but went right to the closet and brought our shawls and hoods. 'Come,' said he; 'I have something nice to show you.' We saw that he did not mean to go alone, so we fixed up, and

casting a regretful look at our comfortable room, set off for meeting. We each took his arm, and went on teasing him, as we liked to do, just to enjoy his good-humored, fatherly way.

“‘And this was what you had to show us, I suppose,’ said Ellen, peering into the darkness to find some mud. ‘Yes, Ellen, this is it. The idea came to me while out in the yard. You see how we can walk through the dark world by a light of our own,’ and Brother Donald held the lantern so as to give a circular radiance just about our feet, as he added: ‘It is comfortable traveling, is it not?’ ‘Just here it is, but how do you know what is beyond,’ said Ellen, laughing. ‘We shall know when we get there with the light, and by the light we shall know where to place our feet; that is, if we will keep our eyes on the light spot, and not go to peering into the darkness. In that case we might stumble, you know, even with a lamp to our feet and a light on our path.’

“‘From that time to this,’ continued Maria, “I have ever, in my darkest moments, looked

for a little light at my feet, and by the time I have taken one step another has been illumined."

"Why, what a little oracle you are," said Mr. Willard, laughing. "How did you know that I was borrowing trouble?"

"I didn't, Walter; I thought you were preparing your first sermon."

"And, like a true helpmeet, you have furnished the text and some valuable hints. But there is a light, only it is in the distance."

"I thought we should come out bright," replied Maria. But it must be late, as all the other houses are dark."

"Country people retire early, and we have been a long time coming from the bridge."

Mr. Willard decided to drive to the lighted house to make inquiries; and the horse, taking courage from a gentle blow, started off at a more rapid pace, and was soon drawn up in front of a tall red house, from the windows of which the light streamed as though on purpose to cheer benighted travelers.

Scarcely had the gentleman tapped at the door before it was opened by an elderly matron, on whose countenance there was an expectant smile, which did not give way to disappointment as she met the glance of a stranger.

“Will you please inform me, madam,” asked Mr. Willard, “if there are in this vicinity any Methodist families?”

“Guess there are,” said the matron, brightening more and more as she extended her hand; “and if this is the new minister, he had better come in and give his name, and I will call somebody to take his horse.”

Mr. Willard gave his name, and lifted from the carriage the little bride, whom the cheerful matron received not with her hand only, but her fat arm, with which she held her fast while directing Mr. Willard to drive round to the stable.

The travelers learned that a minister who had preceded them on the way to his own appointment had told their names, which were forgotten.

"I thought you would come to-night, for Brother Merrill dined here, and said you was on your way, so I built up a fire and boiled the tea-kettle."

This was said while the bustling matron was spreading the cloth and rattling the cups in preparation for tea. The young couple did not yet know the name of their generous hostess. Maria ventured to say :

"Brother Wingate told us to find Sister Wright."

"To be sure he did," said the matron, diving into her tea-caddy ; "he knew I should expect you. I told Mr. Wright and the boys, as they were tired, they might retire if they pleased, but I should keep a fire for the minister."

Very soon Mr. Wright came down from his room. His greeting was friendly and his manner cordial, though in a more quiet way. The boys, too, who had not retired, came in from ministering to the horse, and were presented to the strangers. Joseph, a tall young man, with person and manners like his father, bowed dis-

tantly to Mrs. Willard; while Georgie, a smiling, bright-eyed, chubby boy, representing his mother, came round the table to shake hands.

After a comfortable repast, and an hour of pleasant conversation, the family Bible was opened and select portions read by Mr. Willard. Then, at a glance from her husband, Maria sang one of her sweet evening songs, at which Georgie seemed in ecstacies. At last they all bowed in holy prayer, the minister leading the exercises in humble and devout confessions, thanksgivings, and petitions. Thus it was that Maria commenced her career as the wife of an itinerant.

CHAPTER IV.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.—PSALM xxiii, 6.

As the family and visitors were rising from the breakfast table the next morning Mr. Wright, addressing the minister, said :

“I am a farmer, Brother Willard, and now is the busy season. You will make yourself quite at home here till after the Sabbath. My wife will look to your comfort, and you will excuse me.”

Nothing could have been more manly and decided, and Mr. Willard thankfully returned to his chamber to prepare for the Sabbath, it being already Friday.

Brother Wingate had not overrated the kindness of Sister Wright. Maria found her house, as he said she would, a haven of repose after her journey.

Exposure to the damps of evening after a day of intense heat, added to the unusual excitement of a week at conference, had left Maria languid and feverish, and Sister Wright insisted with motherly care that she should recline on the lounge and rest while she pursued her household duties. Resistance was useless, for the bustling woman brought pillows, and with playful authority succeeded in propping her up, so that Georgie whispered :

“She looks about as much like a minister’s wife as my white kitty does.”

His mother thought so too as she dropped off into a doze, quiet and tranquil, but not so sound but that she could hear the busy housekeeper trotting hither and thither, up chamber and down cellar, out to the pump and into the wood-house, doing with her one pair of hands what with less skill and calculation would have taken half a dozen. By the time Sister Wright had got her cheese into the press, her meat boiling, her puddings baking, and her vegetables soaking in cold water, Maria roused,

and finding herself nicely refreshed, sprang, like the kitty which Georgie said she represented, to the floor.

"Now, Sister Wright," said she, "since I have been obedient and quiet so long, let me help you."

Certainly she might; and Maria laid the dinner table. She then dusted and arranged the parlor, garnishing it from a wilderness of roses that bloomed beneath the window.

In the afternoon they sat together in the same airy fragrant room, and Maria discovered that Sister Wright was quite as active and vigorous in mind as in body. She was so clear-sighted, and took such a common-sense view of things, that it was both entertaining and instructive to converse with her. She informed them that the society had built a new church the last year, which had quite exhausted their funds, and though they had chosen a site for a parsonage, it was doubtful whether they would be able to build it before the next conference year. Meantime they intended to be governed

by the wishes of their pastor, whether to board or prepare a tenement for him. The steward would meet him on Monday evening.

In the evening the minister and his wife walked out. First they rambled in the fields, which were very delightful; but as the dew began to gather they took the highway, and walked over the hill as far as the church. It was a trim little edifice, just in front of a green shady woodland, which was vocal even then with bird-song.

“This is perfectly enchanting, Maria,” said Mr. Willard; “I have never been better pleased. See those beautiful broad fields of waving grass and grain.”

“Yes, Walter,” replied Maria, “I never gaze on such a landscape without thinking of the ‘sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,’ which ‘stand dressed in living green.’”

“Why, what a little poetic thing you are, Maria. When are you going to redeem your promise?”

The young wife looked for an explanation.

"I refer to that journal, Maria," continued Mr. Willard; "I am anxious you should commence it."

"It would be so silly, Walter."

"Perhaps so, at first, but you would improve."

"I am afraid you would laugh at it, Walter."

"I laugh at it, Maria? not I," replied he in surprise. "I won't even look at it unless you wish."

"Then I will write. It was only you I feared, because you are clever, and I never was."

"Then fear no more," said Mr. Willard. "I never will intrude on a lady's private journal, only promise me one thing."

"What is that, Walter?"

"That you will never destroy it."

Maria promised, and the next morning she rose early, and sat down to her pen. Very shy was the little lady, not venturing even to sit at the same table with her clever husband; but she took her light stand, and placed it at another window.

Mr. Willard was so far behind that she felt secure. She did not know how much he was amused by her innocent perplexities.

For a long time she sat twining her ringlets round her forefinger, (for she still wore them as when a child), and biting the feathers of a goose quill. Her eye was fixed on distant objects from the window. At last, as if gathering inspiration from the view, she dipped her pen, and commenced tracing her thoughts.

Ah, timid one; dost thou know that the characters so tremblingly written, and so steadfastly concealed even from the eye of love, will one day be read by thousands of curious and critical eyes. It began thus :

“I never thought of writing a journal till he proposed it. I have nothing to record of interest, and if I had could not do it in an interesting manner, for I have not the pen of a ready writer. No wonder; I was but a poor little blighted bud, warmed and brought to life by two loving hearts, for what purpose I have never known, for I had nothing to return save

the love of a grateful heart. That seemed all inadequate even in my darkest days. But now, when goodness and love are beaming all around me, what shall I render?

“They are misanthropists who call this a dark and cold world. I have never found it so. Wherever I turn there is light and warmth. I love to contemplate the earth, the broad, green earth, spread out with fatherly care for human interest and human want. The mountain and the valley, the river and the seas, bringing forth their treasures for the sustenance of man. And O! I love to gaze at eve on the glory of the firmament of rolling worlds in which our sphere revolves. How fragrant and reviving the air, wafted from hillside and beds of roses. What a study to watch the trees from the swelling bud on through all its gradual changes to the ripened fruit, and know that Eternal Wisdom is directing the whole merely to tempt the taste and regale the appetite.

“It is a long time since I knew a father’s care or a mother’s love, and it was a long time

that I closed my eyes to the interpretation of that mysterious providence which made me an orphan. But now I see it all. My heavenly Father would have me all his own. For this purpose he sent the blight and mildew upon earthly pleasures, that I might turn to him in whom there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures evermore.

“And because I was physically and morally weak, he gave to me a kind foster-father and brother to guard my faltering steps. One brought me by care and gentle love to womanhood, and the other to the Saviour. Thus I learned to lead a happy and, I trust, not quite a useless life. Was not that enough? I thought so, and was content till *he* came, and then I found that there were other unappropriated tendrils in my fond heart.”

CHAPTER V.

Yielding pacifieth great offenses.—Ecol. x, 4.

“MONDAY morn.

“I knew that my journal would be silly, as it is likely to prove. I hate to soil the paper with writing trivial things, but husband insists that I shall find it useful in making me wise and experienced.

“After writing two pages on Saturday, I went below and assisted Sister Wright in her preparation for the Sabbath. She said that I was quick and handy, but that is because she is so good-natured. She let me watch her while preparing meat for roasting, and showed me how to make a *Sunday pudding*, meaning by that a pudding that is better eaten cold, and I entered the process in my little receipt-book. After which I dressed myself in one of my simple lawns, which Walter likes so well, pinned on a little lace collar with my pearl brooch that

Sylvia Hargrave gave me, because she said it was just fit for such a little quakeress, and sat down to read.

“After a time I heard Sister Wright’s rocking chair in the parlor, and thought I would go and sit with her. When I entered I found Georgie was rocking his mother by the back of the chair. He looked very smiling at me, which led me to ask if his father had given him a half holiday.

“‘Yes,’ said he, ‘we don’t work Saturday afternoon unless very much hurried.’

“‘And your father has gone to ride with Mr. Willard,’ said I, for I liked his pleasant smile and manner.

“Georgie said he had, and then leaned over, and whispered to his mother.

“They both looked at me, and smiled; and I observed that I thought they might admit me to their confidence.

“Sister Wright said she saw no other way, for Georgie wanted me to go strawberrying with him. I was delighted with the invitation,

and ran up to my chamber to get my sun-bonnet. When I returned Sister Wright said I had better be seated, for Georgie would have to brush up a little.

“Very soon he came in, his face shining from the quantity of soap used in washing, his hair combed all on one side, and dressed in a fresh suit of jean. He had on the whitest of chip hats, and in his hand two of the brightest of tin dippers, which with boyish gallantry he insisted on carrying himself. As he left the house he made a parting bow to his mother, as though she were a country school madam, which I imitated by just such a kind of courtesy. Georgie was excessively delighted, and seemed as though he would never laugh enough at my playfulness.

“We found a nice plat covered with the crimson berry, and I was about to plunge into the thickest part, when Georgie with a little hesitating blush informed me that I might stain my white frock. I thanked him, and, proceeding with more caution, had the pleasure of fill-

ing my dipper without soiling my robes, a misfortune which I was sure would have caused my young friend great regret.

“‘I wish we had brought bigger dishes,’ said he, when we could no longer make the berries lay on the heaped dippers.

“I replied that we had enough for tea, and didn’t care for strawberries on the Sabbath. Georgie laughed. ‘I might as well tell you, that I wanted to keep you out, because there is a disagreeable old woman coming to see you.’

“To see me, Georgie?

“‘Yes; she spent the forenoon at Mrs. Parsons’s, where I carried some lamb. I heard her say she was coming to see the minister’s wife.’

“‘O Georgie,’ said I, trying to look repulsively.

“‘Don’t be angry, Mrs. Willard,’ he replied; ‘you don’t know what a tease she is. She is always insisting that good people must look and act disagreeable, or else they are not like the Saviour. Mrs. Willard,’ continued he, ‘do you think the Saviour while on earth looked like

that scarecrow? I don't think he did look like that ugly man of straw set up to frighten the crows.'

"I replied, I had no doubt the Saviour was very beautiful.

"'To be sure he was,' said he briskly; 'but Aunt Comfort don't think so. She makes a fright of herself, and is angry with others who don't do the same. Don't you think her stupid?'

"I answered, that being unacquainted I could not judge; but if she was going to call on me, I thought we had better make haste home, and so we set off, the little fellow politely opening the bars and gates.

"'If I was a minister,' said he, laughing, as he was standing by some bars for me to pass through, 'I would put a fellow at the door of the church, and they should refuse entrance to every body that wouldn't be pretty and agreeable. There should be no Aunt Comforts there.'

"'And what if there should be such a sentinel at the entrance gate of heaven?' said I.

"'That would be hard on a naughty boy,' he

replied ; 'but here is the door, and there is the old black bonnet; now look out.' And with a mingled look of sympathy and mischief the boy ran to the pantry with the berries.

"I could not retire to my room without passing through the parlor, so I bathed my warm face at the kitchen sink, washed the stains from my fingers, and went directly in. Sister Wright introduced the visiter as sister Comfort Poor. We shook hands. Spite of Georgie's warning I was not prepared for the look I met, and sat down feeling rather uncomfortable. She had severe gray eyes, which she opened very wide while taking rather a protracted survey of my person. Even after I sat down I could not raise my eyes to her face without meeting that ugly stare. Had she addressed me, or given me an opportunity to address her, it would not have seemed so awkward, but she continued on, giving Sister Wright a detail of her domestic trials.

"From the conversation I learned that she was a maiden lady, having the care of an indigent and infirm father. I felt sorry for her misfor-



SISTER COMFORT POOR.

tune, and resolved to conciliate her. When Sister Wright went out to put on the tea-kettle I tried to get the lady to talk with me. I spoke of the weather, remarking it was very fine.

“‘Fine enough,’ she said, ‘to sit still in, but dreadful hot to do housework.’

“I praised the new church and its location; but she informed me, ‘twas bleak enough in winter.’ At last I asked her of the prosperity of the Church. The last question unloosed her tongue. ‘There was,’ she said, ‘a great falling away; the brethren had become ambitious, and the sisters proud. True, they had a large congregation, for they had grown popular; but there was not half the life in preaching nowadays that there used to be.’

“I tried to sympathize with Sister Poor, and said, ‘I hoped we should have a revival of the work of grace,’ etc. It was a bad move for me, as she quickly replied:

“‘Mrs. Willard, it’s no use hoping for such things while we are not living for them. What can we expect when ministers are going round

with kid gloves on, and their wives are wearing white gowns, curled hair, and bosom pins."

"I think I am a little nervous, for at once I felt very hot in my face, and the handkerchief I was hemming seemed all enveloped in mist. I didn't care for my part of the reproof, but to have *him* spoken of in that manner was really trying. Just then the gentlemen came in. Mr. Wright introduced Walter, and he pulled off his glove and shook hands. Husband looked at me, but as tea was announced did not speak, and somehow as we were passing out, Sister Wright got near enough to give me a little pat on the cheek, and then I knew she understood why they were red. After grace Walter asked if my head ached, as my face was flushed.

"I said, 'A very little,' and then Sister Wright, good soul, told him that I had been after berries with Georgie, and she handed him a plate full. That drew attention to the fruit, and I got along nicely.

"In the evening we had a class in the dining-room, which was very interesting. I felt better,

for I had been walking with Walter in the garden where it was cool. He told me that he had met with several of his people, with whom he was very much pleased. He looked happy, and my head and heart were cured.

“Sister Poor spoke very feelingly of her trials, and expressed a hope that they would be sanctified to her. Walter addressed her with words of sympathy and encouragement, and at the close of the meeting she came to me, and ‘hoped I would come and see how poor folks lived,’ for which ‘hope’ I thanked her.

“When I arose yesterday morning I was somewhat perplexed. I thought perhaps I ought to knot up my hair in some way, and yet I was afraid Walter would not like it. While we were at prayer in our room I felt sure it was my duty, and I determined to speak to him. For this purpose, when I was standing before the glass, brushing my hair, I said very softly :

“‘Walter,’ and he answered, ‘My dear,’ without looking up from the notes before him. But when I said, ‘Just a minute, Walter,’ he

rose up, and coming behind me looked at my reflection in the glass. I then told him that I thought of putting my hair back in some way, and when he asked me why, I explained that being a woman and a minister's wife I thought it might be well to look as dignified as possible.

“‘Certainly,’ said he, ‘but that is not the reason you have;’ and so I was obliged to tell him about Sister Poor, and added that there might be many a Sister Poor among his people.

“I had never seen Walter frown, and it might have been a flaw in the mirror; but he looked slightly ruffled, and walked quickly to his seat.

“‘Maria,’ said he, ‘you will find enough to do if you heed such impertinent remarks.’

“His cheek had reddened very much, and I saw that there was another red one in the glass, besides some very watery eyes. Still I felt that it was my duty to persevere, so I shook my head at the silly face in the glass and whispered,

‘Be strong, Minnie, be strong,’ at which it looked calm and serious.

“In a few moments Walter said, ‘Do as you please, my dear, you are a better judge than I am,’ and then my fingers flew very lightly, as I gathered up the curls into a little twist.

“When the breakfast bell rung I was all ready for church, having my wedding-dress on, which did not require either collar or pin. I threw a little azure scarf on my neck, which *did* look rather pale and tender from having been so long hidden, and then I went to Walter and asked if I would do.

“He did not answer, but I knew by his look that he was not angry as he led me down stairs. As I entered the breakfast-room I was conscious of Georgie’s starting and looking very earnestly at me, so after I had greeted the rest of the family I walked up to him, saying, ‘This is Mrs. Willard, the minister’s wife.’

“Georgie took my offered hand, bowed, laughed, and with his own rustic grace handed me to the breakfast-table.

“He is a dear boy ; I have entered him on my list of friends, and left a petition, daily renewed, at the mercy-seat, that he may become a jewel in my Saviour’s crown.

“I feel sure it will be answered.”

CHAPTER VI.

Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.—1 COR. ix, 14.

Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.—1 THESS. v, 21.

At the meeting of the stewards Mr. Willard expressed a willingness to board if it were a greater convenience to his brethren.

When the question was started who would board the minister and lady, no less than six sturdy farmers arose and proffered their hospitable welcome.

Here was a dilemma to the stranger, for to him was left the ungracious task of refusing five of them.

So it seemed at first; but Mr. Willard, with one of his happy thoughts, arose, and with grateful thanks accepted them all!

Yes, the whole six; he would have the pleasure of living with each of them. As they were already domesticated with Brother Wright they

would remain for two months, and then change to Brother Green's if he pleased, and so on till they had shared the hospitality of all. He came to labor for and with them; he hoped to prove himself their servant for Jesus' sake.

It was not much of a speech, but it proved to be a satisfactory one.

The meeting adjourned with the best of feelings, and the minister returned to his wife in fine spirits.

"I am sorry, my dear," said he, "that you cannot improve your domestic qualities by practice, since you desire it; but I don't regret that you are to be kept another year free from domestic cares and labors."

Maria was glad they were to board. She would have been glad to keep house had that been the arrangement, but as it was not, she was glad still. The little lady had the spirit of the apostle. He had learned to be content; and she, having no sorrow and never being indifferent, was always *glad*.

"And now, Maria," said the husband, "we

had better make some definite arrangement about our studies, that every hour may have its appropriate duty."

It was rather a difficult task, for it was not Mr. Willard's business hour, and Maria was all "wide awake," so that before they were aware they were off on some pleasant chit-chat.

"This proves," said Mr. Willard, "the necessity of method. Come, let us begin," and Maria wrote down resolutions to this effect: They would rise at four in the morning, and while she was arranging the chamber, (which answered the double purpose of study and bedroom,) he was, in fine weather, to take a brisk morning walk, after which they would pray together, and converse for a few moments on their own experience and progress in divine things. That would bring them to study hours, which with him would last till two or three, but with her not longer than ten, after which she must take exercise in some way. The evening would be spent in social duties, etc.

This plan completed, the minister requested,

as he had before done, that she would act the part of critic while listening to his sermons, and of friend in their daily intercourse with others.

“For I have faults, Maria, of some of which I am conscious, and others doubtless to which my self-love has blinded me; promise me therefore that you will point them out.”

Maria promised that he should have enough of her fault-finding, and they set to work unpacking trunks and boxes, and, with Sister Wright’s directions and assistance, they became that evening settled and prepared for labor.

Mr. Willard was a man of deep and unfeigned piety. He had given his heart’s first best affections to God, enlisted under the Captain of his salvation, taken upon himself the Gospel armor, thereby waging a perpetual warfare with the kingdom of darkness, and could never rest without active service. He had come to realize that a vast proportion of the good seed of the “word” was lost from want of care and skill on the part of the “sower.” With this conviction his sermons were prepared with

great labor, often entirely written, not for pulpit use, but to improve and simplify every sentence. It was astonishing what an effect such a course produced. Ideas, beautiful and original, started out of the chaos of his mind, and sublime imageries came from he knew not where, to fill the argument, and not only were they transferred to the unsullied page, but at the same moment engraven on the tablet of his memory. In this way his mind became a storehouse for treasures new and old, while he studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

After preaching a few simple introductory sermons, as was his wont to a new people, Mr. Willard studied a series on the authenticity of the Scriptures as proved by profane history. These he prepared with great care and labor, and corresponding accuracy.

This is not the place to give even a general view of these sermons, in which Mr. Willard had collected so much of argument and testi-

mony from so many sources. Suffice it to say they were well prepared, and dedicated to God before being offered to his people.

They were also well delivered, for our itinerant had become a polished shaft in the Almighty's quiver ; and what was better than all else, they were delivered in humble faith that the word would not return to Him void, but accomplish that for which it was sent.

CHAPTER VII.

For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

MATTHEW vi, 21.

"WE have changed our residence to Brother Green's. Husband says we magnify the itinerancy. Our new home is not like the one we left. Sister Green is a poor little complaining woman, with half a score of untutored children. Her husband calls her '*woman*,' and the children all run at his approach, caring for nothing but to clear his track. The whole family are in a constant bustle and hurry to get a living, and yet they don't seem to live. We have family prayers and 'grace' at meals, but there is scarcely a 'comma' between the 'Amen' and some absurd worldly remark.

"Husband refuses to pray in the morning, for their hurried, anxious manner disturbs him; but at evening he leads in prayer, while half the family are nodding from weariness. What a

contrast between this family and Sister Wright's. One lady is queen and absolute mistress of the whole establishment, and the husband an honored guest; while the other 'woman' is only housekeeper and cook under the directions of her 'lord.' I am sure that the Greens are not living after God's ordinance, and yet they are both church-members. I feel for the children, and would like to get some access to their little minds.

"Walter studies very hard. I sometimes fear for his health. He has been led to preach a series of sermons against infidelity. Brother Holden has remarked that he did not think there was an infidel in the place, and for his part he would rather have good old-fashioned Methodist sermons. I think Walter was a little tried, but he has not changed his purpose. I do not know what impartial judges think, but it seems to me that the sermons were excellent. There is a stranger here from B., a young lawyer, who is staying with his brother to recruit his health. He looks very ill, and

Walter is much interested in him. He sits just opposite me in church, and pays strict attention to every word of the sermon. It may be the state of his health, but I have never seen a countenance so expressive of emotion. Last Sabbath, when Walter was summing up the testimony of martyrs, who with their blood had sealed their Christian faith, he was a most eager listener. After speaking of the general weight of testimony, especially *dying testimony*, Walter asked with great earnestness who would doubt the sincerity of a religious teacher, who, with the dread apparatus of martyrdom before him, asserted that he saw Jesus after he had risen from the dead, had conversed with him many days, that he had put his hand into the print in his sides, and in the ardor of his joyful conviction exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God.' At this point the stranger reddened to his temples, and I saw him dash away a tear with a very nervous motion.

"I have become very anxious for this people. There has not been a revival for several years,

and there are scores of young people living out of Christ. The people are very kind to us. Even Sister Comfort Poor tolerates my white dresses and Walter's gloves. I am glad I put away the childish curls for her sake. I would do anything rather than injure *his* influence. Sometimes I fear that I am selfish in my earnestness for the success of the Gospel through our instrumentality; but I greatly desire the prosperity of Zion, and my soul yearns for these unconverted youth.

"Last evening we called on Sister Wright. Georgie met us at the gate, and took me down in the garden to look at his melons. After walking round a while, and admiring everything he pointed out, I discovered that it was not for that purpose he had invited me. At last it came out. He was glad I had not quarreled with Aunt Comfort, and was afraid it was rather mean in him to tell such things of her.

"'Then you would not keep her out of heaven for being disagreeable, would you?' I asked.

“‘O no,’ he replied, ‘I hope she won’t stay away on my account. I was in there yesterday to take some things from mother, and really she looked so poor and uncomfortable that I thought it was a little too bad for a fellow to dislike her so much as I do.’

“‘Then you mean to like her,’ said I, smiling.

“‘If I don’t,’ said Georgie, blushing, ‘I won’t tell of it again.’

“Walter and I went into the chamber to get some books, for we can keep but few at our new place. On the table we found a card with the name of ‘Mr. Jarvis.’ Walter was surprised, and ran down to ascertain where it came from, but no one knew. Sister Wright thought it probable that it had been sent by some child, who, thinking it was our room, had taken it up while she was in the back part of the house. The name, however, was that of the sick stranger, and Walter went immediately to call on him. He found the poor man in his room, suffering from asthma. He received my husband with great cordiality, and said that he had sent

the card in the morning; had heard that Mr. Willard was once a student at —, where he graduated; was ill and rather lonely, and hoped he should be excused for his freedom.

“I am sure Walter was glad to excuse him, for I never saw him so interested in a stranger. He has often stopped in his studies to speak of him. In our morning exercises in our room he prayed very fervently for him. O how I long for his salvation! I think he has not long to live. We need a revival of the work of grace here. Walter says he is not called a revival preacher, though many souls have been converted under his labors. But there is a burden on my spirit. I will bear it to the throne of grace.”

CHAPTER VIII.

The singers that did the work were fled, every one.—NEH. xiii, 10.

THERE was nothing Mr. Willard so much disliked as rousing the emotions, and moving the passions of his hearers, before convincing their judgment, and bringing their reason to the side of truth and religion. He was aware that much of the “falling away” that often succeeds revivals is owing to an injudicious dispensation of the “word.” Laboring on such principles, what wonder that his reports of conversions numbered far less than those of many of his brethren. Nor is it a marvel that some of the restless spirits on S—— circuit complained that their minister was cold and formal, and had his eye on the fashionable and fastidious of his congregation. After his defense of the Scriptures, Mr. Willard went on to prove by those divine revelations the sublime and awful doctrines of man’s eternal destiny; that this life is

but the entrance to a state of endless being, in which is received the first bent, the upward or downward tendency, of a course which is to run onward and onward forever and ever. In fulfilling the end for which he was designed he would awake to the great principles of his existence, become wise unto salvation, avail himself of the atoning blood of Christ, (without which there is no remission of sin,) and advance to glory and immortality in that house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. But if, on the other hand, he should fix his affections on the sordid things of earth, to which his earthly clay alone could claim affinity, let his body rule his spirit, the passions of earth supplant the aspirations of heaven, allow this mortal life to shut out the prospect of immortality, let time swallow up the interests of eternity, well might it be said of such a man that he had adjudged himself unworthy of eternal life.

But while Mr. Willard was laboring to convince his hearers of the truth, and Maria was pouring out her soul with strong crying and

tears for their conversion, the old arch enemy of both was raising what a wag not unaptly termed a "roaring breeze" among the choir.

A word of explanation will inform the reader how matters stood. Previous to the building of the new church the Methodists had worshiped in an old town-house. The singing had been led by Brother Holden, assisted by a few brethren and sisters, among whom Aunt Comfort, with her shrill, piping voice, got up a very respectable "upper part." These were happy times, for the Church, though few in number, was united, and what of melody was wanting in their voices was made up with their hearts, which were all in harmony.

But after a time the good people grew tired of worshiping in a temple dedicated to party strife and political debates, and wisely determined to build a house of prayer. While the church was in progress some of the reformers of the day started a singing school, to initiate the young people in the science of music. In due time both meeting-house and choir were ready for

use, and the latter was installed for the purpose of assisting in dedicating the former.

Then there occurred a new difficulty. The old singers were not to be driven from their post, and the new decided not to strike a note with them. By skillful management they persuaded Brother Holden that he was particularly needed on the bass, and removed him back, where he could beat time with his whole body without being seen by the congregation. Aunt Comfort was kept from the dedication by the severe illness of her father, and afterward abandoned the seats, in holy horror of the gay ribbons and fluttering gauzes that occupied them.

The worldlings were now in peaceful possession of the singing department. The good old fugue tunes were abandoned, and bass, tenor, treble, and alto, like four horses abreast, galloped through the lay, dividing its burden between them.

This state of things came to be borne very patiently, and soon the choir meditated another encroachment on the conformists. What was

the dismay of the brethren to see on one glorious Sabbath morning Mr. Stamper, the dancing master, with his fiddle, standing beside the chorister. This was too much. The Church felt that they should long ago have said, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." They would say it now, and so, after several nods and whispers, (during which Mr. Willard sat with book in hand, quite unconscious of the storm that was brewing,) brother Holden arose, and stepping to the new musician, requested him to retire from that place.

Mr. Stamper made one of his politest bows, and tiptoed out of the gallery. Brother Holden returned to his seat, highly gratified at the result of his decision of character.

Quiet being restored, Mr. Willard opened the exercises by reading the morning hymn. When he had concluded, and lifted his eyes to the choir to reiterate the page and number, behold, no choir remained! All had gone except Brother Holden, and he seemed certainly in no singing mood.

What a situation for a sensitive pastor, not knowing who was the offending party. After waiting several moments, during which there was a great commotion and turning of heads, Brother Holden thought they would omit singing.

Happy was it for that pastor that he was permitted to go into the inner temple at that trying moment. Had he gone before his people he might have failed. But no faltering or trembling was felt in the omniscient presence; for like as a father pitith his children, so the Lord pitith them that fear him. Mr. Willard came forth from his holy communings with a spirit refreshed and renewed by divine aid. He read the second hymn in a manner and tone that went to the hearts of many of the singers, who were scattered in the nooks of the gallery and near the porch below.

The day was passed without any singing, but two better sermons (it was said) were never preached in that town. During the week some of the Church called on the minister, asking

his advice relative to what should be done. He declined offering any counsel in the case at that time, leaving the Church and singers to settle their own affairs if practicable. Brother Holden would have given one of his fattest kine to bring the singers back, and they would have sacrificed as much to restore their former harmony; but he would not coax them, and they would not come without coaxing, and so Sabbath after Sabbath passed without their part of the service.

But there is a power above; One who can make even the wrath of men to praise Him, as was proved. On a bright autumnal morning, when Mr. Willard had prepared a sermon on the frailty of man, with illustrations from the book of nature, he read the hymn commencing:

"O God! our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home."

Scarcely had he closed the hymn ere Maria struck the key note, and burst into a strain of

song so plaintive and appropriate that it seemed to vibrate on every soul. Mr. Jarvis, with whom the minister had cultivated quite an intimacy, and who sat with Mrs. Willard, moved softly to her side, and rolled out a very harmonious bass. These were strange words for one who for many years had trusted alone to blind chance. Poor man, he was fast nearing the untrodden shore; who would guide him thither?

CHAPTER IX.

And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.—ACTS ii, 47.

“WE have had great trials of late, and Walter seems much perplexed. The difficulty among the singers has given rise to much hardness, and many unpleasant remarks. Walter steadily refuses to take either side in the quarrel. Had they asked him before ejecting the musician he would have given counsel; but now he does not feel called upon to intermeddle. The dancing master has sent a polite note to Walter, expressive of regret at the disturbance he has unwittingly caused. He attends church regularly, and listens with respectful attention. I sometimes sing either before or after the sermon, but never unless my heart is strongly moved to do it. It is wonderful how the Lord strengthens me. I can but feel that this dark cloud will be succeeded by a time of rejoicing

and prosperity. God hath promised it to me, and I know that his promises never fail.

* * * * *

“The mercy drops are beginning to fall. In our class-meeting there were two daughters of Brother Haynes, who expressed deep anxiety for their souls' salvation. Yesterday Mr. Jarvis called while Walter was out, and I went down to receive him. He brought a book which he had borrowed, but I saw that was not the object of his call. He was very feeble, and expressed discouragement relative to his health. What could I do but tell him of the great Physician, who was able to heal both soul and body.

“He was silent for a few moments, and then frankly acknowledged that he would gladly resign all human interests for a hope in Him. He leaves us soon for his city home. Shall he not go a wiser and a happier man?

* * * * *

“We are having a glorious revival. Last Sabbath was New-Year's day, and an eventful one

to this Church. Half a score of happy converts took the gallery, and praised God with their hearts and voices in holy song. In the evening prayer-meeting Mr. Jarvis arose and announced his intention to seek the Saviour. I never saw Walter so much affected; he sobbed like a child. They love each other like brethren, and I can hardly bear that he should leave us. Fourteen have joined on trial, and yet they come.

“This is the second revival that I have witnessed among the Methodists. At first I expected a great uproar among the people, but it never came. Seekers are anxious, and the redeemed are earnest, and yet there are no inconsistencies or extravagances such as I have heard of under similar circumstances. I believe that God’s house being a house of order, his Spirit never moves to disorder. His children, too, may be to some extent discerners of spirits, and rule over them. Brother Holden has a few eccentricities, at which Georgie Wright is stumbling. Walter being absent he spent last evening in our room. I was led to

converse with him on religious subjects. He frankly acknowledged that he would like to be a Christian, could he possess the right kind of religion.

“‘I don’t want Mr. Holden’s kind,’ said he.

“‘You will be sure to get the genuine article,’ said I, ‘if you apply to the right source.’

“‘I suppose so,’ he replied; ‘but when I look at that man, and then at my brother Joseph, I think there isn’t much in religion after all. Mr. Holden is never religious except in times of revival, and then he leaps all at once from below “zero” up to “fever heat;” and when that “turns” he goes down as quick. What good is there in such religion?’

“‘I don’t know,’ said I, ‘not having power to read his heart; but perhaps he never had such religious instruction as you and Joseph have. The principles of Christianity have been taught you from your youth up, and you have followed virtuous examples; but what said the Saviour to the moral young man in the Gospel?’

“Georgie blushed, and I saw by his glistening eye that he felt more on the subject than he wished to express. Dear Sister Wright says she has no higher ambition for her keen, quick-sighted boy than that of seeing him a traveling preacher.

“Yesterday I received a letter from Captain Hargrave. He is yet strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. He speaks of the high honor to which God has called us; says that it is meet that we who gave ‘our early affections to God should be exalted to soldiers in this holy war, while he, a poor old superannuate in the service of Satan, should just float lazily into heaven. Not that I complain,’ says he, ‘for I know that I shall receive my “penny a day” till life ends; but O what a treasure I might have laid up in heaven! But now I shall have to be a pensioner on my Lord’s bounty forever and ever.’

“Dear old man! I wept as I read his letter, so simple, so hearty, and so characteristic. Surely he is having the reward of faith, even without

its fight, and then in his humility to esteem even me better than himself. O how worthless I felt as I read it!

* * * * *

“Brother Jarvis has gone home. He is fast failing in health, and has, as he said, no doubt gone home to die. He saw that Walter and I were affected by that remark, and recalled it. ‘No, no,’ said he, ‘I am going home to die no more.’ He was happy in God, and his pale face lighted up with holy fire.

“The revival is yet in progress. Slowly and quietly they come to the mercy-seat, and ere we are aware they are joying in the God of their salvation. Sister Wright’s two boys have come to the decision to seek Christ, and their progress is characteristic of their different natures. George weeps as though his ‘head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears,’ while Joseph is “waiting patiently for the Lord.”

* * * * *

“The winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, and the

time of the singing of birds is come. Our conference year is almost ended. Already my heart is clinging to this people with a painful presentiment of separation. We have been unusually blest; so Walter says, and he is acquainted with the itinerancy. True, we have had trials. We have not found a Sister Wright at each of our boarding places; there have been some slight divisions and jealousies among the sisters, and yet I am such a poor little thing that I can do nothing but love them all. Happily, however, these differences are all adjusted, and now there is a great union of effort. Walter has persuaded the brethren to commence a parsonage, and the sisters are preparing furnishings. I have never seen Walter so much interested in any secular enterprise. He labors every day on the ground, planting trees and laying out walks. I sometimes feel as though he ought to return to carry out his plans, and have the pleasure and benefit of them; but no, he says, God forbid that he should put his hand to the itinerant plow and look back.

Who goeth a-warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?"

CHAPTER X.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.—JAMES i, 12.

How many times did Mrs. Willard think of those suggestive queries (written in her journal) during the next few weeks in which they were engaged in moving and settling on a new charge. How vividly they came to her mind as she descended from their carriage at the door of a tasteful parsonage, almost a model of the one Mr. Willard had been planning for his successor. There was a nice shrubbery plot in front and a vegetable garden in the rear, and both fruits and flowers were just springing to life.

Beside the stable-door stood a gentle cow, the loan of a good brother to the four children of his former minister, on condition that the eldest son should milk her.

Mrs. Muly had been driven home while the parsonage was closed, but every evening she was found waiting at its gate, patiently chewing her cud, as though she was expecting the new minister, and had full faith in the itinerant system.

Mr. Willard had experienced some of his old misgivings about their outfit for housekeeping, but Maria always insisted that they had a great many things if only spread out, and so they seemed when all compressed into one room. It was a great relief to find the house furnished with the heaviest articles of furniture. But with all their arranging and spreading out, Mr. Willard found many articles unsupplied even after he had spent his last dollar.

It was then that Maria brought forth the little purse given by Captain Hargrave, "a bit of pin money," he said, which the frugal lady had hoarded expressly for that emergency. This supplied every want, even to the purchasing of a few groceries for their first cooking.

It was a great day that first Saturday at the

parsonage. The young couple arose early, for each had to prepare for the Sabbath in their respective departments. But first they must go through the house, to see if everything looked as neat and trim as when viewed by candlelight the last thing before retiring ; yes, just the same, the parlor, the sitting-room, the spare chamber, and the little kitchen where Maria had arranged for a Saturday baking just as model housewives do. The good sisters in the village had sent them their meals all cooked for the first day or two, so that Mrs. Willard was now to make her first attempts as cook and housekeeper.

Mr. Willard looked at the flour, and butter, and milk, and eggs, and then at the little lady with her snowy wrapper and delicate hands, and wondered how they would get even a breakfast, to say nothing of the Saturday baking.

“My dear,” said he, “you must have a servant ; why didn’t you ask Sister Andrews about one ?”

“A servant, Walter,” said Maria, laughing,

“what would your people say, with our small family. No, no, wait till you have a “curate” to perform your labors, and then I will have some one to serve me; till then we will together serve the Church.”

“But what shall I do for you, Maria?”

“Nothing, I think; yes, stay, Walter; please get me a few of the rhubarb stalks, and then you must go to your study. Remember I have only to prepare food for you and me, while you are to supply a new audience with a spiritual repast.”

“Yes,” said he, “and not only that, but also to meet their intellectual wants, cater to their fastidious tastes and their eager curiosity.” So saying Mr. Willard walked out to the garden, thinking that no minister of Christ so much needed inspiration as the Gospel itinerant.

Walking in the gravel-paths which bordered the beds, Mr. Willard discovered that the early vegetables were already rivaled by the weeds, which, taking advantage of the absence of the sower, had sprung up, and were now drawing

from earth and air the nourishment which should have been imbibed by his seed. From his early habits of reasoning he was led from the natural to the moral reflections.

He thought of the field which is the world, and of the good seed growing side by side with the enemy's tares. *They* were sown while *men slept*. What need of care and vigilance.

He thought of the great rotary wheel by which his people supplied sowers, who were scattering the seed broadcast over the land.

They could not stop to watch its germination, or to nourish the tender plants as they came forth. Then came the thought of the people he had left on the last circuit, those tender plants. Was the present laborer a skillful husbandman? Would they grow and thrive under his fostering care?

And his present people, what was their state? Was the good seed germinating there, or was the fallow ground still unbroken? Where in

the great moralizing process should he begin, and at what point direct his effort?

Walking to the other end of the garden to execute the mission of his wife, he looked across a square into another garden, where another minister of the Lord Jesus was inhaling the morning air, and strengthening his system by a little useful exercise.

Walter remembered to have heard that Mr. Lawson had lived there for twenty-five years. He owned a house and small farm, a vineyard, and a garden of herbs. Beside him Mr. Willard saw a tall youth, while a graceful maiden was talking to them from the door. And so he had sons and daughters, and children in the Gospel. His care would guide and guard them; his hand would rear them to physical and moral manhood, while they, as in duty bound, would minister in carnal things, surround him with creature comforts, smooth his downhill passage, and finally support his dying head when the Master should call for him.

“Why, Walter, what a dreamer you are,

did'nt you hear the bell?" asked a pleasant voice by his side, while a little hand was laid on his arm.

"The bell, Maria, what bell?" asked Mr. Willard.

"My own bell, to be sure; I rang twice, and then came to fetch you; I have the nicest breakfast all ready for you."

Maria thought he might have praised her coffee and short cake, but concluded to consider it a sufficient token of his approbation that he took three pieces of one and two cups of the other.

Then was brought the family Bible, and the last chapter of John was read for the morning lesson. Maria noticed that her husband paused after reading the words of Peter: "And what shall this man do?" Very slowly he read the answer of the Saviour: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Mrs. Willard wondered if he meant to have that for his text the next day. She wondered

too why he prayed in a deep, troubled voice, to be kept in the hour of fierce temptation.

She was glad when he went to his study, for she feared he was thinking of her inexperience. But how busy was the little wife that morning, and how happy she was when her husband descended to dinner, and saw her little baking spread out on the side table to cool, so nice and orderly, and herself just as white and clean as ever. His wondering look made her laugh outright. It was as though some magician had wrought the whole, and he would scarcely have been more surprised had his wife been sitting with him the whole morning as she used to do when boarding.

“How bright and happy you look, Walter,” said the lady; “so different from what you were this morning. I wish that I knew what troubled you so.”

“Nothing except a little temptation from the enemy. It is gone now, my dear.”

For his introductory sermon on that charge Mr. Willard chose the words of the apostle:

“I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.”

It was remarked by many of his hearers on that day that there was a singular appropriateness in the sermon. They did not know of the dark cloud that preceded so much light, nor did they know of the hour of temptation, or the divine appearing of the Lord.

CHAPTER XI.

Ye are honorable, but we are despised. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?—PAUL.

“WE have a beautiful home, and everything as nice and comfortable as we could desire. Our society is large, respectable, and intelligent. Walter works an hour every morning in the garden, weeding, hoeing, and watering, which he says is very invigorating both to him and the plants. We have radishes, asparagus, and currants. Other vegetables are nearly ready for use. I have had a little trial in not being able to share my husband’s morning labors. A slight cough, attended with languor, has alarmed Walter, and led him to consult Dr. Page on my account. I was very loth at first; but after I had learned what a kind old man he was, and a Christian brother, I felt better. He has prohibited exposure to any damp-

ness, and even ordered me a morning nap, a habit I have never indulged, though of late I have had a great inclination for it.

"He permits me to perform my household labors on condition that I neither wash nor iron. Sister Lake comes once a week and works a day for me. She is a good woman, though poor, and looks after me as though I were a child.

"Our church is nearly filled on the Sabbath. We have excellent singing, and a fine organ is played in the choir. Our people supply all our wants, and we abound in good things.

"I wish I could say that we are abounding in the work of the Lord; but sometimes I fear that there is more of worldly than of divine prosperity. But few attend the class-meetings, and in the public prayer-meetings only Sister Lake dares to open her mouth besides one or two brethren.

"This is a very fastidious people. They have almost wearied the Conference with their petitions and remonstrances, and Walter has

learned since coming that they expressly desired him this year. From that circumstance he fears that they have overrated his qualifications. I am very sure that they have underrated his principles and firmness, if they intend to establish a popular ministry at the expense of our discipline and usages.

“There is a burden on his spirit, and I often hear him in agonizing secret prayer. I know that he cannot fail while trusting in God, and I am thankful that he has no disposition to sit down and bask in the sunlight of popular favor. He is a bitter enemy to intemperance and oppression in any form, and his soul abhors the whole system of American slavery.

“I learned from a remark made by Dr. Page that such principles were just now unpopular in this place. He seemed to think that their former pastor had in a measure fostered those prejudices in the Church, and pleasantly observed that a minister had need to keep his theological glasses very clear to discern which side his bread was buttered. He seemed to say

it in pleasantry, but I fancy it was designed to put Walter on his guard.

“ My husband seldom tells me now of anything that weighs on his mind; he fears I am too feeble to bear his burdens. He does not know the strength of my love, nor what I could bear for him and the Church.

“ Precious immortal souls, how they twine about my heart! Instead of being gathered into the Church by her faith and prayer, they stand without, watching the defilements of the world thrown upon her garments.

“ Walter preached last Sabbath from Romans xiii, 14: ‘But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh.’ In one of his arguments he touched upon the outward adorning of the Christian in a manner I had never before heard him do. I did not wonder, for the body of the church is one big show-case of ribbons, flounces, satins, brocades, and artificial flowers. I have never seen so gay an assemblage in church. There seemed no room for the Lord Jesus. Sister Lake said she heard

a young clerk whisper, when the text was read :
'That article is not worn this season.'

"There has been a delegation from the sisterhood to put me in fashionable trim: I accepted their services, but declined their ornaments, which seemed to astonish them. I would like to please them, but cannot consent to be made an exhibition of all their domestic and foreign finery. Not that I judge him who eateth (or weareth) all things; I only ask that I in my weakness and simplicity be permitted my simple garments and my dinner of herbs.

* * * * * *

"We have a most interesting Sabbath school. I daily thank God for that. Dear little children, how I love them, and how earnestly I long that they may be gathered into the fold of Christ.

"It seems to me that Sabbath school teachers fail in this thing; they do not seem to expect the conversion of those little ones for whom they labor; they do not bring their instructions down to the simple test of repentance, and

faith toward God. Who does not know that at no age does the sinner feel the need of Christ as in early childhood? What Christian does not remember his childhood's longings for an assurance of pardoned sin? And yet but little of the instruction given teaches that now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

"I was talking to a little girl last Sabbath, when she asked me, with the greatest simplicity, if I thought the Saviour knew as much about little children as when on earth. I assured her that he did, and that he could hear their prayers and bless them just as well as while taking them in his arms.

"O the bright, tearful look she gave me! It seemed to say: 'O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat.'

"I have promised to tell them about little Harry Hargrave, my dear young pupil, from whom I learned so much."

CHAPTER XII.

Will ye pollute me among my people, for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls that should not live.—EZEKIEL xiii, 19.

THE people of G. were, as Mrs. Willard hinted, exceedingly fastidious. Proud, ambitious, and worldly-minded, they had sacrificed almost everything but their name to an elevated social position in society. By slow degrees they had come to their present state. Time was when the Church numbered but a handful. They were then a feeble band.

Feeble, did I say? Pardon me, courteous reader, and allow me to correct that statement. They were a host in strength, mighty in faith and devotedness to each other, and mighty in their power of prayer. Those prayers were answered. There came a sweeping revival of grace. Scores flocked to their little temple of worship, till the place became too

strait for them. With their increase of wealth they built a large and commodious church, with modern fixtures and fashionable adornments. Old things passed away, and all things became new. But, alas! with them also passed much of their humility, godly faith, and singleness of purpose. Their day of visitation had gone by, and they had improved it more for secular than for spiritual good. What wonder that it was followed by a season of declension, wherein the Church forgot God and rejoiced in her own strength. With jealous eyes they watched their pastors, not for the bread of life, but for food for their lofty imaginations.

For several years each Conference was annoyed and embarrassed with their petitions and representations, while their complaints might have been expressed in the homely lines found in the Tate and Brady collection :

“One read too fast, and one too slow;
This prayed too loud, and that too low;
Some had a tone, some had no gift;
Some preached too weak, and some too swift;
And all of them were wrong.”

But just as their morbid sensibility had risen to its highest pitch, the rising fame of Walter Willard came to their ears exaggerated by report, which never detracts one item from the budget she bears.

The people of G. seized upon his name at once. He was just the man for them. It was for that self-same purpose that God had raised him up. They were sure that every excellence wanting in those they knew was concentrated in the unknown minister, and so Brother Bascomb was authorized to write to Conference in their behalf.

Now it happened that the presiding elder of that district was a person of age and experience. He knew what was in man. With almost fatherly pride he had watched the coming up of the timid, modest Willard. He knew him to be a man of firm principle, who would never yield to any guilty compromise. Quiet and gentle as a child he seemed, till roused to action by holy zeal in the cause of truth and right, and then he towered like a giant in his

strength. The elder was wont to say that such laborers would restore the Church to their primitive holiness and prosperity.

“The G—— Circuit wants Brother Willard, does it?” said the aged elder.

“O yes, nobody else for the G—— Circuit.”

“They shall have him,” and the dark eagle eye of the old gentleman rolled round on his brethren with something of its youthful merriment.

Such was the state of the Church when Mr. Willard came among them as their preacher in charge, and was received with open arms. He was a noble looking man. The ladies said he was beautiful, and looked like a picture in their fine pulpit. His figure was perfection, his dress genteel, his manners elegant, and his voice charming. (We quote from the gossip of the day.)

The first few sermons were extremely satisfactory; nothing could be more appropriate than those general truths, which every one knew.

For once they had a minister who preached the simple Gospel without meddling with the troublesome questions of the day.

But after a time the word became sharp and powerful, penetrating the joints of the armors of self-righteousness, and charging home upon his hearers the sins of the times. Like Paul, he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. And strange to tell, while many an unbelieving Felix trembled at the word, the Church began to retreat to her strongholds for defensive action. What made the whole affair very strange was that the minister knew nothing of the sore place he had so unconsciously hit. He knew not that the poor little lean woman who shrank into the farther corner of the free back pews was once a member of the Church, and had withdrawn because Brother Bascomb had fostered her husband's drunken appetite till he had ruined the whole family. Poor woman, she could not commune with her brother with that burning hatred in her bosom, and so she banished herself from

the table of her Lord, though she still lingered around the sheepfold.

There was a strange fascination in those eager, hungry eyes, riveted upon the speaker as he denounced the respectable retailer of strong drink, who puts the cup to his neighbor's lips. Again and again he turned to meet that burning gaze.

While leaving the house he encountered again in the porch that unearthly stare ; it almost troubled him. To break the spell he extended his hand. It was grasped with a strength that seemed hardly belonging to so feeble a frame. Sure enough the spell was broken. From those stony eyes came tears as Mr. Willard returned the pressure, and said "God bless you, sister."

The poor woman glided down the steps, and walked quietly away.

It was just after that sermon on intemperance that Dr. Page gave the hint that Mrs. Willard alluded to in her journal. By some association the minister was led to think of the temptation

he experienced while walking in the garden, and he wondered if that were not a foreshadowing of coming events, a sort of envoy from his spiritual enemy; and it was with comfort that he remembered that his foe had been vanquished on the spot.

CHAPTER XIII.

And Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?—JOHN vi, 70.

MR. WILLARD sat in his quiet study the day after one of those deep-searching sermons from which the Church was so much shrinking. His mind was tranquil, although body and spirit were depressed from recent toils. The weather was warm, just the season when his physical system (never vigorous) could ill bear great exertion, and yet both that and his mental had been tasked to their utmost capabilities. The low state of the Church, their foolish affinity with the pride and fashions of the world, their guilty compromise with the crying sins of the day, was to the godly man a grief and a vexation.

Had the place been but a valley of dry bones, he might have had hope that by the spirit of prophecy bone would come to its fellow bone, sinews and flesh be restored, and skin cover

them, yea, and breath from the four winds of heaven impart life to them ; but in their present state even more was needed. Not with that proud, vaunting multitude, could he go to war with the powers of darkness. The people had got to be sifted and tried, they were by far too many. Hence it was that the spirit of the servant of God agonized in the preparation of the word for them, while that "word," like living fire shut up in his bones, was wasting his vital energies.

But it was his day of rest; not till the morrow was he to resume his studies. That morning should be devoted to his friends. A few letters were to be written, and then he meant to finish a little "child-song" for Maria, for which she had already composed sweet music.

The letters were finished, and already several stanzas of the song were written, (prepared with a view to a Sabbath-school exhibition,) when there came a decided "tong tong" from the brass knocker at the door.

The pastor closed his portfolio, almost

ashamed of one of his boy pastimes, and casting a hurried glance at the mirror, just long enough to see a crumpled bosom and two hands pulling nervously at a crushed and wilted dickey, he ran down to the door.

What a surprise! There was Brother Bascomb and Brother Pollard, headed by Dr. Page, who, with a little warning wink, and a sympathizing pressure of the hand, prepared his friend for the greetings of the other gentlemen. Even with such a preparation they were quite awkward enough to provoke a smile from any one not quite as sensitive as Mr. Walter Willard.

Their averted faces, their downcast eyes, their ceremonious bows at nothing in particular, their rigid fingers, suggestive of cramp or nightmare, were anything but inspiriting to the pastor. Recollecting that Mrs. Willard (busy with her washerwoman) had not garnished his study as usual, he turned toward the parlor; but Mr. Bascomb, probably fearing that a lady's presence might be brought to bear on his ill-nature,

growled "Business" in such a tone that Mr. Willard thought prudent to take them at once to the study, where his lady never entered when visitors were present.

The gentlemen seated, he stepped behind them to the mirror, where, with the aid of some little fixings, purloined from a drawer near, the minister arrived at a presentable appearance, meanwhile hazarding some general remark about the weather. A grunt of indifference from one, and silence from the other, convinced him that the "weather" was no part of their "business," and so he sat down in an attitude of respectful attention, and waited the opening of the subject.

"We have come," said Mr. Bascomb, after a few preliminary hems, "to have a little conversation relative to the subjects of your late sermons."

He paused as though expecting an answer, and received it in a little bow.

Brother Bascomb went on to state his case. By judicious management, such as avoiding all

agitating questions, and securing pastors who preached the "simple gospel," the Church had arrived at a position of influence and respectability in the village. Judge M. worshiped at their church when in town. Lawyers B. and C. owned each a pew in the house, and Senator W. had selected their organ.

Another pause, and another little bow, gave evidence that the minister listened.

"I don't know what your debates and your resolutions may be worth in Conference," continued Mr. Bascomb, rising and pacing the floor; "but this we do know, that the subjects of them have never been brought before this people by the pastor of the Church."

"To what subjects do you allude, Brother Bascomb?" asked Mr. Willard.

"Well, in the first place, you are obviously of strong anti-slavery principles."

"Certainly I am," said the pastor.

"And you denounce the retailer of ardent spirits quite as severely as you do the common drunkard."

"He is the most guilty of the two," said Mr. Willard firmly.

"That, sir, is a matter of opinion," retorted the other, gathering warmth at the coolness of his opponent. "I presume no one will place *me* on a level with the drunkard, and yet in my large business operations I dispose yearly of many barrels of liquor to my workmen;" and the angry man looked as though he expected his pastor to fall at his feet in penitence for his presumption. But no, there was only another little nod of attention.

"Such are the customs here, sir," continued Brother Bascomb. "And with such customs the society has grown and flourished, as I said before, and we are not willing that its harmony should be disturbed. For that reason we cannot consent that our pastor should meddle with those delicate and exciting subjects," and the gentleman sat down as though relieved of an oppressive burden.

"What would you have me do?" asked Mr. Willard gently.

“Do?” replied his dictator; “why, call sinners to repentance, and gather souls into the Church. They are triumphing because you lash the Church and neglect them. Let them know that there is a God in Israel. I do not wish to give advice, but I think, now that you have been instructed as to the state of the people, that you will see the propriety of attending to what may be justly termed your own business.”

So saying Brother Bascomb rose, and informing the other visitors that as he had business “up street” he would leave them there, departed, making a great bow in leaving.

No sooner had he left than Brother Pollard, who always congealed in presence of the great man, softened at once. He regretted the unpleasant character of their visit; hoped Brother Willard would not feel hurt; Brother Bascomb was a little “set,” but he meant to do right; he was the main pillar in the Church; had given the organ, etc. In short, it was the old test of worthiness: *“He loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.”*

After the leave-taking of Brother Pollard, Dr. Page sat an hour in pleasant chit-chat. Adhering to his old rule of minding and doing his own business, he never alluded to the remarks of the gentlemen, or in any way hinted his opinion of the matter. The good doctor was not governed by policy in the thing, but from the first he had so entirely trusted his pastor that he had no wish to bias him in any way. Not till he heard the little tinkle of the dinner-bell did he descend the stairs in company with his friend, taking leave at the door.

It was with a smiling countenance that Mr. Willard met his wife at the table. Sister Lake was there too, (she had brought a clean cap and dress on purpose to dine with the minister when the washing was done,) and he was deliberating whether or not he should tell the business of the morning. Sister Lake he could trust; but from his little wife, with her pale face and one rosy cheek, her token of weariness, he thought it prudent to conceal the whole matter. So he met her inquiring glance with

one of tenderness, and repeated in playful tones
one verse of the little song he was sure she
would like.

It brought a deeper glow to the reddened
cheek, and checked the inquisitive look.

Ah, gentle one! wast thou satisfied with the
innocent ruse that beguiled thine affectionate
solicitude? Yea, satisfied of the loving motive,
which to a true wife is always satisfactory.

Methodist itinerant, fail in anything or ev-
erything short of your duty to your God, rather
than fail one particle in your affectionate con-
sideration for the partner of your weary lot.
Let her know and feel every moment that, next
to God and his Church, she has the highest seat
and warmest nook in your undivided heart.

CHAPTER XIV.

And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. My bones are pierced: I take no rest.—JOB xxx, 16, 17.

“WE have rather exciting times of late. Brother Bascomb has left the meeting, drawing off with his family many others over whom he has influence.

“From the first Walter has felt it his duty to be very plain and pointed in his sermons, and has given offense by not yielding to their dictation in the matter.

“For a time he concealed his trials, but seeing me anxious has told me all. For his sake I hope God will restore me to my usual health. In any case I know all will be well. Walter is in a blessed state of mind, sheltered in the Rock of Ages. Every part of his discourses is prepared with fervent prayer, and watered with tears.

"We have had a singular adventure. While at family prayer yesterday morning I heard some one softly enter the kitchen. When we had risen from prayers Sister Lake came in, saying in her pleasant, motherly way, that she had made an early call.

"At Walter's request she brought a cup and plate, and sat down to breakfast with us. She said she had been watching with a Mrs. Morris, who was once a member of our Church, but had withdrawn. 'I think,' said she, looking up at my husband, 'that you once shook hands with her in the porch without an introduction.'

"Walter started, and asked if it were that pale, wild looking woman, so scantily dressed.

"Sister Lake said 'Yes,' and added, 'she was wild enough now, poor thing.'

"We were both deeply interested, and to our inquiries Sister Lake gave the following history:

"'Emily Salters was twenty years ago the village school teacher. She was called the pret-

tiest and the best girl in town. Very early in life she loved the Saviour, and lived a pious, humble, useful life. Her gentle goodness won upon the heart of Harry Morris, a bold, handsome youth of very gay, dashing manners, and every one said but for her he would be a *wild boy*.

“He was a mechanic, and Emily would have willingly married him when his trade was completed, and have begun life in a humble way, with only their brave hearts and active hands; but Harry said “No,” he would get money, for Emily should be as fine as she was pretty and good. And so with many tears she saw him depart in pursuit of wealth.

“After a time a letter came stating that he was in the employ of a southern planter, who was paying him a handsome salary. His business was to oversee a gang of negroes in their milling operations. “Emily,” he wrote, “you know how I abhor this horrid system, but I can make the condition of these negroes a little easier by my kindness, and for your sake I

shall strive to close my eyes, and ears, and mouth even, till I save enough to make us a happy home."

"Several times he sent her small sums, which she carefully put by with her own earnings, to fit out that "happy home" she was looking forward to.

"At last came Harry, bright and handsome as ever, but penniless. In taking the part of a pious female slave, who had recently married an intelligent mulatto, he had struck the wretch who, with the basest intentions, was pursuing her.

"Nothing remained to Harry but flight, leaving his wages behind. It was then that Emily showed the strength of her love by bringing forward her hoarded stores, and begging Harry to rent a little cottage and remain with her.

"They were married, and were very happy for a time. Harry, whose genius was the talk of the town, got employment with Mr. Basscomb, and by the time little Harry and Emily

were large enough to play round the door, their parents owned the cottage and the nice garden in the rear.

“‘But after a time it was reported that Harry had taken to drink, and Emily began to look sad. By little and little they have come down to poverty and ruin.’

“Walter asked: ‘How did the poor woman come to leave the Church?’

“Sister Lake replied: ‘She got angry with Mr. Bascomb. Time after time had her husband broken off from drinking, but then he was so dull and low-spirited that he could not attend to the difficult business assigned him. O how Emily would labor to keep him with her till he had conquered that fatal appetite! Then Mr. Bascomb would come and drag him off to the inns, ply him with portions of brandy till he had secured his valuable services for a day or two, and then leave him to the drunken spree he was sure to have, taking care not to furnish the last few glasses for the poor wretch.’

“‘What! are those things known?’ asked

Walter; 'if so, how is it that that proud man has been allowed such sway in the Christian Church, while so grievously injuring those people ?'

"Sister Lake answered by meekly saying: 'The rich have many friends, but the poor are forgotten of their neighbors.'

"In the afternoon Walter took Sister Lake and me over to see the sick woman. Her home is a poor hut out on the plains, and it is said that they subsist at this season on the blueberries, and what they can get in exchange for them, picked by young Emily, who, in spite of her nut-brown complexion, is very pretty. We were informed that the son had gone to sea.

"We could not drive up to the door, for there were old logs lying all about, and so we got out of the carriage and walked up the winding path, which was narrow, and overhung with brakes and tangled weeds.

"The woman is ill of brain fever, and as we drew near we could hear her raving, in a sort of wailing voice that went to my heart.

“ Sister Lake hurried forward, and succeeded in quieting her; for a time she lay quite composed. There was a pale, haggard-looking man in the corner of the room, who, from his sad, dejected look, I felt sure was Harry Morris.

“ After a few minutes we were introduced to him, and then the woman started and opened her eyes very wide, gazing alternately at Walter and then at me. I was a little dizzy, and sat down by the door; but my husband went up to the bed, and, taking the hand of the sick woman, called her Sister Morris, and said he was sorry to find her so ill.

“ ‘ Sister Morris? Who is it calls me thus?’ said she.

“ Mrs. Lake answered: ‘ It is Brother Willard, our minister.’

“ ‘ To be sure,’ said she; ‘ but don’t call me sister; that was my name long ago before the fiend came to me. It is not sister, nor is it Emily; not now, not now; ask Harry, poor Harry.’ The husband groaned, and she went on. ‘ Yes, call me fiend, for that is what I am;

the fiend is here (and she laid her hand on her breast) and here ;' and before Walter was aware, she had brought his hand with violence against her forehead.

“ Walter was alarmed, and disengaging his hand, he gently stroked her brow, after which she became calm, and lay quite composed, while he talked soothingly of sanctified afflictions, and their design on the Christian.

“ I thought she was listening, but soon she burst out in a wild laugh, fixing those great dark eyes on his face.

“ ‘ You told him of it, did’nt you, sir ? ’ said she ; ‘ how he wriggled in his seat, and that man is a member of the Church, and there is plenty more of them not quite so bad. Tell me, sir,’ said she, springing up, ‘ what you mean to do with that Church ? ’

“ Walter answered : ‘ I trust God will send his Holy Spirit to revive and cleanse it.’

“ ‘ I’ll tell what you had better do,’ said she ; ‘ I have thought of it all night, and that is what makes me so tired. You must turn them all out

of the Methodist Church, every one of them, and have it all cleaned out, the whole Church militant needs it; but you have nothing to do with other branches, but have this cleansed faithfully. Martha Lake could help, she is so tidy; but mind after it is done who you put back into it.'

"Walter said he hoped she would come forth from that sick-bed renewed, and take her place in the Christian Church.

"‘Man,’ said she, sternly, ‘do you know that I hate him?’

"Walter asked whom she hated, and she answered, ‘That proud, swelling man, Alexander Bascomb !’

"O how my heart ached, when the husband came forward, saying, ‘Don’t, don’t, Emily, pray be calm,’ and she drew his hand under her head and laid her hot cheek on it, murmuring, ‘Poor Harry Morris.’

"Walter says that he cannot bear that she should either live or die in that state, and we have made her a subject of especial prayer."

CHAPTER XV.

For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.—ROMANS, xv, 27.

AUTUMN came with its yellow sunshine and its mild breezes. The fruits of the earth had been gathered in, and nature was yielding to quiet decay. It was the season for pensive reflection and moral resolution ; the season when Mr. Willard was wont to gird up his loins for a combat with the powers of sin, and a victory over them. How many souls had dated their spiritual birth from that season of falling leaves, and how many, even now, were waiting to be gathered into the spiritual garner !

But, alas ! there was excitement and turmoil in the Church. Innocently, and with the purest intentions, the minister had brought discord and division, and outside of the Church there was a great uproar among the people. Like as it was

in Iconium, in the days of Paul, "the multitude of the city was divided," and part held with the minister and part with the offended brethren.

It was a time of fiery trial to the good man. His shrinking reserve was misunderstood for unapproachable dignity, so that he had little means of knowing how many friends were sympathizing with him.

Besides all this there was to the affectionate husband a dread apprehension of domestic bereavement, which, with all his godly submission, lay like ice in his heart. There had come to the parsonage a dear little boy, and for a time the young mother seemed to have imparted nearly all of her frail life to the poor tiny wailer.

There she lay, day after day, only breathing and smiling. Occasionally, with great exertion, she would whisper to her anxious husband, "Don't grieve, dear Walter, all is well;" while Sister Lake, the kind nurse, and Dr. Page, labored night and day to restore her.

There were many ingredients in the bitter

cup which God had permitted to be mingled for the good man.

Not the least embarrassing was pecuniary difficulties; for since the Church had been quarreling about the quality of the bread of life imparted by their pastor, they had almost forgotten to supply him with the meat which perisheth; and now that sickness had made both nurse and house-maid necessary, besides many incidental expenses, the pastor found his larder lean and his purse empty. What was he to do? The brethren who had faithfully stood by him through his troubles had already paid more than their share for ministerial support, and of course did not feel it their duty to do what belonged to others; while, from the pastor's delicate reserve, many misjudged his circumstances.

For a while Mr. Willard had a quiet little girl in the kitchen, who had been trained to make the most and best of everything. Under her frugal management their meals came regularly and in order, from what he considered an empty

barrel and a wasted cruise. But after a time little Lucy left, and for want of a better the minister had to take a strapping Irish girl, who had been cook in a neighboring hotel. She was well qualified for her office in such a place, but was little versed in the mysteries of economy.

We will give for illustration a single view of the pastor's trials.

It was Friday, and such had been the toils and anxiety of the week that no preparation had been made for the Sabbath. Two sermons were to be prepared for that exceedingly fastidious people. Two rich Gospel feasts were to be served up in good style, in first, second, and third courses, with a desert of nice closing remarks.

The text was selected, and the introduction arranged, when up came the cook, with heavy steps, each of which found an echo in the beating heart of the minister.

“Have ye ordered the mate, sir, for dinner?”

“The meat, Mary?” asked he deprecatingly.

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THE PERPLEXED PASTOR.

"Yes, the mate; is it to be sent, or will I go and fetch it?"

"Isn't there some fish, Mary?" asked Mr. Willard briskly, as though he had a great desire for some, though his last three dinners had been of that article.

"Just a nape of cod, yer honor."

"Well, you can mince it," said he, bending over his book, as though excessively busy.

"And the second course, sir?"

"O, anything you like; bread and butter will do," replied the embarrassed minister.

Off went the cook, muttering they would have to take that or nothing.

Study on, good man! your people have fine intellectual appetites, which must be gratified.

Study on! What though your breakfast was a cup of weak tea and a slice of corn-bread, your head need not be empty because your stomach is!

Up came the cook again: "The tay, sir, is all out of the caddy."

"We will have water for dinner," was the answer.

"But the nurse? I always makes tay for nurses;" and Mary departed, having spoken two words for herself and another for the nurse.

And so the pastor had to exchange his old dressing-gown for a coat, and his slippers for boots, go down street, and add another item to his bill of groceries, not knowing how it would be paid.

Study on, Mr. Willard; your mind can be occupied in Sabbath preparation though engaged in the avocation of errand boy. Have a smile and a bow for the fair ladies who are flitting hither and thither on this bright autumnal day. But do not forget your sermon, for they are selecting their fall style of bonnets, and will surely all be to church next Sabbath.

Now haste thee home, for don't you see it is dinner-time. The fragrant steam is issuing from many a heated kitchen. How delicious it smells at this hungry hour. Roast meats, high-

seasoned gravies, fresh steaks, puddings and pastry, all await the shopping ladies and their affluent husbands.

Brighten up, good man, for here comes a troop of laughing, rosy children from school, and see, they recognize their pastor, and smile at his approach, bringing to that pensive countenance a gleam of sunshine neither feigned nor forced.

The tea deposited on the kitchen table, the minister hurried back to his study, for every moment was precious. How hard to collect those jostled ideas; how difficult to prevent his thoughts from going out after those luxurious dinners in preparation, whose odor had mocked his eager appetite.

Ah, study on, good brother, for those who fare sumptuously and live delicately must not be fed on ordinary spiritual food. They have soft, itching ears, and love good things. Bring down your ponderous classics, and pore over them; this fine people like to know that their pastor is learned.

“Tinkle, tinkle,” went the little bell, informing the pastor that the bit of fish was minced, and the bread spread for his dinner.

Was it necessary to make so nice a toilette for that little dinner? It was, for first he must step in to see poor little wifey, and she was not allowed to know how much care and anxiety he had. He would appear cheerful and well cared for; so he bathed his fevered brow, and brushed his dark locks, and carried a pleasant smile to the sick room, and Maria whispered, “She would soon be well, and sit up to dinner with him,” and he had to fetch the little boy and let her see him in his arms.

Dinner over, the minister had to go again to his room, and apply himself busily to his task till evening.

A fat, elderly sister came to spend the afternoon, and take tea with the minister’s family, On her way homeward she called on a friend, and observed she had but two things against Brother Willard: one was his keeping in his chamber all the time, and the other was being

so genteel that they could have nothing for tea but sliced bread and a few crackers; for her part she did not see what they were made of.

Gentle reader, your pastor is made of the same flesh and blood as yourself. He requires the same solids and fluids to sustain his nature that you do. Is he well sustained? Are you sure that no perplexing cares are weighing on his spirit while preparing his sermons? If not, you are cheating your own souls; while the servant of God, laboring as he is with a trammeled spirit, either fails in his ministrations, or, overleaping every barrier, he throws himself entirely into the work, and is spent at once in his Master's cause.

Beware lest ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous.

CHAPTER XVI.

Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.—
PSALM ci, 5.

WHILE the spirit of the young mother was hovering between its love of the dear ones in her earthly home and the dear ones in the happy spirit-home to which it is the Christian's gain to go, the third quarterly meeting drew near. At that time Mr. Willard expected to meet his presiding minister, and hoped to be comforted by his coming.

So much did he long to see his experienced elder brother that after a night of anxious watching with his wife he fell asleep and dreamed that his elder was with him, but that in passing through the street the good man had been stung by a serpent.

He scarcely thought of the dream afterward until the Saturday when the meeting com-

menced. By the kind aid of Sister Lake there had come a small supply of edibles to the parsonage, and the pastor was for the time relieved from cankering care. Added to this Dr. Page informed the anxious husband that the symptoms of his wife were slightly encouraging; and so with a comparatively light heart he requested the nurse to see that everything was in preparation for entertaining the elder.

It was near the meeting hour, when the minister walked down to the church to see if it was properly ventilated and warmed for the occasion. As he passed Oak-street he lifted his eyes and saw the presiding brother coming toward him. Yes, there was the tall, erect form, the slightly-wrinkled brow, and the dark, eagle eye, whose piercing gaze Mr. Willard had learned to love.

His first impulse was to bound forward to meet him, but a second glance showed that the gentleman was engaged. By his side, and with his arm linked in that of the elder, walked Brother Bascomb. He was dressed with the

most scrupulous care, and was, from his polished boots up to his glossy beaver, a striking contrast to the way-worn pilgrim by his side. The left hand that rested on the dusty sleeve of the elder was incased in soft kid, but the right hand glove was held in the bare soft palm for the purpose of gesticulating, which was very neatly done.

Nothing could exceed the bland smile that hovered over the whole countenance of the man, even down to the rolls of his dimpled chin, as he inclined his head toward the elder and conversed in low, earnest tones.

Mr. Willard was not jealous or suspicious, but when the gentleman drew near, and he had grasped the hand of the brother for whose coming he had so much longed, and had looked into his dark, peculiar eye, there came to his heart a bitter pang, and with it a remembrance of his strange dream.

Mr. Willard did entertain his elder, and they sat together in the study till a neighboring clock told the hour of twelve, and then parted

as such brethren should never part, even for a night. Yes, the good elder had been deceived, had been *stung by the serpent-tongue* of that purse-proud man, who, though he had a name in the Christian Church, bore a selfish heart, and was guided by unsound principles.

The good man was not so much to blame after all, for it is hard to judge between man and man. Brother Bascomb was among the elder's first friends on that district. He was warm-hearted, hospitable, and generous; and by warming, cheering, and caring for the good man, had enlisted his social sympathies; and then, like himself, he was verging toward old age. His brown hair was plentifully besprinkled with white; and who does not know that age has affinity even stronger than youth. Mr. Bascomb stood high in the community, as who cannot with wealth for a stepping stone? And, lastly, he was of repute among the brethren. With all these considerations, what wonder that the clear-sighted individual on whose judgment all relied, should for once be hood-winked, and

in his heart do injustice to the pastor under his supervision? Or is it a marvel that the old spirit, not quite exterminated in Mr. Walter Willard, should rebel against such injustice and its expression? It did rebel, and though he did not abate one particle of his respectful deference to his official superior, his late "good-night" was low and frigid.

Mr. Willard was too much aggrieved to wish to sleep, and so he sat down by the window of his lone room to meditate. The night had come in damp and drizzly, and now as the dim light shone on the darkened panes of glass it revealed running drops from the pattering rain so distinctly heard. Mr. Willard fancied them tears, and pressing his hand to his breast wished that such would relieve his swollen heart.

Then he thought of his poor little wife, who had considerately banished him during the quarterly meeting. With what tender recollection came the gushing tears, mocking in their profusion the trickling raindrops as they came

welling up from their troubled depths. Beside the lone couch, and with his heaving bosom resting thereon, the next half hour was spent in tears and prayer, and then the Angel of Peace breathed upon the servant of God. As he laid down to rest she folded her mantle about him, wiped the falling tear, cooled the fevered brow, and sealed the eyelids to repose, whispering: "My peace give I unto thee, not as the world giveth, give I unto thee. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Nor did the morning light frighten away the peaceful dove; it hid itself in the bosom of the good man, and throughout the day folded its wings near his heart.

The Church complained that the services were something of a failure. The love-feast was anything but a feast of love. The bread was tough and the water icy, and each seemed emblematic of the feelings of the partakers. The morning discourse was by a local preacher, on the fall of Babylon. The afternoon was Ezekiel's vision, by the presiding elder. Brother

Bascomb was wonderfully edified at each. "Such preaching," he said, "would build up any Church." That they were good sermons no one acquainted with the preachers could doubt.

Mr. Willard was no judge, for throughout the whole he had sat in silent communings with his God.

CHAPTER XVII.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you.—
1 PETER, iv, 12.

“It is a long time since I have looked into my little journal, and I hardly know where to begin in my jottings. So let me review.

“The last few pages were of Sister Morris. At last she is at rest, and young Emily is my faithful maid. While I write she sits by the cradle and studies her Testament. Poor girl, she has been afflicted, and her young heart is yearning toward the Saviour. Her mother died triumphant, having experienced renewed justification. On her death-bed she sent for Mr. Bascomb, and humbly begged pardon for hating him so much, and implored him by his hopes of heaven not to lead poor Harry into temptation. Her heart relieved of its oppressive burden, she became very happy, and

shouted the praises of God with her latest breath.

“Dr. Page has found employment for the husband, and Walter has great hopes of his reform.

“I can write but little of the Church, for I have been kept in ignorance of its affairs. I know that there is a division, and some have left the meeting. Their number, however, is often more than made up by the members of a neighboring society, whose pastor is infirm, and often unable to preach. Once he came with his flock to our church. Walter preached Jesus and him crucified, and they listened as though it were a life-giving word to them.

* * * * * *

“Our little Walter is a beautiful boy, and his father loves him, O so tenderly! He says nothing is too hard for him now, since God has given us back to him. I tell him but for this stuffed chair and wicker cradle, with their occupants, he might be quite independent; and he, foolish man, says they are all the world to him.

"My long sickness has been expensive, and husband has had to contract debts. I fear that he is very anxious on that account, though he never speaks of it to me. And I, poor helpless thing that I am, can do nothing but pray for him.

"And O how have I proved the care and love of my heavenly Father. He has been a never-failing help in the hour of trouble. Let me record his mercies.

"As the cold weather came on Walter was troubled with a hacking cough, an old complaint of his. I knew that his flannels were quite worn out last spring, and I urged him to get some and have them made without delay. He put me off with assurances that he was not cold; would wear his cloak out of doors, and begged me not to think of him in a way to worry me.

"But O how my heart ached as his hoarse cough rang through the house at night. My head was weak, and I could not properly settle it in my mind. I knew Walter had no money,

and I thought all day and far into the night how his needs could be supplied. Sometimes I thought I would sell something of mine to the sisters; and then I thought it would make talk, and I would send to Sister Wright, of S., who had such a house full of things.

“Strange my thoughts should have gone out after those far-off people when God was so near. At last he whispered to my heart, and then I told him why I was anxious, and made known my request just as I would to a kind earthly father. It was in the name of Jesus, who had suffered the wants of poor human nature, that I made my request, and even then I received the assurance that it would be granted.

“Two days after, as Walter was going out to call on a sick man, he was met by a boy bearing a great bundle. It was directed to Rev. Walter Willard, G——. He brought it to my room, and we had a great time examining it. There were a pair of nice shirts, three flannel under-shirts, two pairs of drawers, two pairs of socks, besides muslin and prints.

"By a little note we found the bundle came from Mother Willard, and the young ladies had made the garments. O may this record of thy mercies lead me to a more perfect trust in thee, my God!

"It is a season of great trial with us. Fierce temptation is on every hand. O why have we been shown that green and flowery path? and why at a time when Walter is smarting from a sense of injustice, and perplexed with worldly cares?

"Rev. Mr. Watson is going abroad for his health, and his people have unanimously petitioned for Walter to take his place. In vain he tells them he is a Trinitarian and a Methodist, and cannot meet their views. They insist that he shall not be trammeled or dictated to in the least. Walter says little, but when he sits and looks at me with the dear babe in my arms I know of what he is thinking; and, truth to tell, I hardly know how I am to bear the fatigue of a removal. And yet I would rather be laid beneath the deep snows in yonder

grave-yard, with my boy on my bosom, than be the means of swerving him from the path of duty.

“I saw Walter looking up the hill-side where stands the beautiful residence of Mr. Watson. The house is shaded with tall elms, and from the east window is a fine prospect of a broad lake.

“That home can be ours for at least two years, and the salary is such that we might return to the itinerary in circumstances comparatively comfortable. So Walter says, and I know that he is in a very furnace of trial on account of the temptation. O thou ‘*Form of the Fourth*,’ be with him and deliver him unscathed!”

CHAPTER XVIII.

Praise ye the Lord, which executeth judgment for the oppressed : which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoner. Praise ye the Lord.—PSALM cxlvii, 1, 7, 10.

NEW-YEAR came in fair and glorious. The bright stars, which had danced and twinkled the livelong night alike at the couch of the dying year and the birth of the new, one by one began to fade before the rosy light which was fast tinging the eastern horizon. The god of day rolled up as though refreshed by repose, and first throwing a cursory glance over nature, proceeded at his leisure to explore the valleys and nooks of his dominion. Into the habitations of men he threw his golden rays on that morning with a sort of “Happy-new-year” radiance.

After a time, that bright morning sun took a “peep” at the home of *our* itinerant.

Wonder if it had never before looked at a

similar home that it must stare in such a way, and even after the curtains had been drawn peep through the folds, and lay in golden strips on the floor.

What did it see ?

It saw, a servant of God bending over his family Bible, reading in rich manly tones the word of life. On his brow sat sublime thought, as of holy triumph.

“A happy new-year,” Mr. Willard, *not as the world giveth*. Another year of poverty and pain, of toil and of trial, and yet a happy new-year about thy Father’s business.

What more did it see ?

By his side sat a young wife, frail and colorless as the snow-wreath, yet strong as the Rock on which she leaned. Her loving, tearful eye was often turned toward the reader. She knew that he had prevailed, knew that the bow of holy promise had spanned the intricate path of duty, and made it plain. No gilded tinsel hung about that path, nor was it strewn with golden dust. All bare and rugged it winds its way up

the “Hill Difficulty” between the “chained lions,” through the valley where dwells “Apollyon,” and by the dungeon of “Giant Despair.” The “*Hill Lucre*” was passed, and along the narrow way the godly woman could see the footprints of her dying Lord, and not for all the mines of Golconda would she abandon that path. No, no ; she would rather fall by its side, and lie beneath those rugged stones hallowed by such an impress.

“A happy new-year,” Maria, thou blessed of the Lord ; the reward of faith is thine, even without its arduous *fight*. Behold it in the bright crown awaiting thee !

What more could be seen, as the sun peeps beside the other curtain, and strikes another golden line ?

A sleeping babe. On his rosy lips hovered a sweet smile, as though angel forms were visible to his sealed vision, and angel whispers were breathing delicious dreams.

“A happy new-year,” dear boy ; scores of happy years, all spent in the service of God.

And a happy new-year to the meek-eyed maiden who watches the little cradle. Poor and friendless, a servant of servants she was, yet in possession of a pearl of great price, by which she had become a daughter of the Lord God Almighty.

That morning was the Sabbath; and that week Mr. Willard was to give an answer whether or not he would locate at the next Conference, and minister at the Unitarian altar.

As usual since the failure of Mr. Watson, the church was filled from his house. The text of the morning was from Gal. vi, 17: "*From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*"

The sermon was not finished ere his new friends felt that they were answered, felt, too, that the servant of God was right. As he brought forth his strong reasons why the disciple was not greater than his Lord, and why he should suffer with the Son of Man if he would reign with him, the congregation was melted to tears in a manner never before seen.

That week Mr. Watson called on the pastor, and spent a social hour with his family in a very pleasant manner. He was particularly struck with the appearance of Mrs. Willard, whom he had never before seen, and he would fain know whether the pale face, with its peculiarly beaming expression, was merely native loveliness, or what had been called the impress of a sanctified heart.

To draw her out he delicately hinted at the trials of ministers' wives in general, and particularly of itinerant ladies.

It is said that silence is sometimes eloquent. Next to that must be the words fitly spoken in simple, faithful defense of right. Those few well-chosen words, which need no addition, will bear no diminution, and tell with all their force on the side of truth.

Such were the remarks of Maria, and such they seemed to the noble man who listened to them.

At leaving he bowed till his brow almost met the little hand he held, and pronounced in

deep, earnest tones, "God bless you, lady." And when far out on the wide waters, (on a voyage of search for that health he never found,) he thought again and again of that pleasant interview; it became to him a bright silvery picture, in which Maria's words shone like "apples of gold."

To Mr. Willard and his people it was the beginning of good days. The precious seed, so long kept back by adverse influences, at length burst forth. Scores of precious souls flocked to the Saviour, and there was great joy among the faithful. Not only was the influence of grace felt among those who had been early trained to the doctrines and system of the Church, but many who had blindly worshiped the great God now came forward, and accepted the mediatorial sacrifice, by which alone man can become justified.

And O what a sifting time was there in the Church! What a coming down of high heads and lofty imaginations! What deep, heart-felt confessions to God and to each other!

How the Church fled to her strongholds, and how its members clustered around their pastor. How many times in a week did Sister Lake have to "run in" and rehearse the scenes which occurred in the social meetings.

And Maria had a smile for every smile, and a tear for every tear.

Gentle reader! for your sake we would linger over our picture, and touch it again and again with the brightness of our recent tracings till its shadows should all disappear. But time flies, and we may not stay. Suffice it to say that Walter Willard was met at Conference as one whom the Church delights to honor. And when his presiding elder came forward, and, extending his hand, said, "I have wronged thee, my brother," there was not in earth or heaven a blessing for which he yearned.

Perhaps we ought, before we close this chapter, to tell of the fortune of Mr. Bascomb. Finding that the Methodists could get along without him, he made a modest tender of his name and influence to the Congregationalists;

but his repute had forestalled him, and the worthy pastor of that people respectfully declined his membership.

Chagrined and disappointed, but not in the least discouraged, he commenced to dabble in politics as well as liquor, keeping the articles mixed or separate, as best suited his patrons.

By a lavish expenditure of the latter, he succeeded so well in the former as to figure largely among those politicians who feel that the welfare of the country depends on their being in some political office. He became a member of the Legislature. His devoted constituents still insist that he is a great man, (of course he is, for he weighs nearly three hundred.) They say too that he is destined to rise, and that he is fit for a president, as fit as some we have had; and we will show our meekness by not contradicting them.

CHAPTER XIX.

For I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.—JEREMIAH ii, 25.

Suffer little children to come unto me.—MATTHEW xix, 14.

MR. WILLARD longed in spirit to return to the flock at G——, and till almost the last day of Conference had hoped to do so.

Those children in the Gospel were very dear, and while away their earnest entreaties that he would return still rung in his ear. How could he leave those tender lambs to another shepherd, except in holy trust to the great Shepherd of Israel. Those brethren, too, who had stood by him alike in evil as in good report, how dear they were.

But the evening before the meeting in which the appointments were to be read, there came to Mr. Willard a letter from good, faithful Dr. Page, which ran thus:

"DEAR BROTHER WILLARD,—I feel that I am doing violence to the affections of your people, and especially my own, in my present advice. Yesterday I called on Mrs. Willard, (do not be alarmed, she is as well as when you left,) and have come to the decision that she should go to the sea-shore without delay, and you had better take such an appointment," etc., etc.

A hasty interview with the bishop, and Mr. Willard was sent to a beautiful village, which we will call Swanton, noted for its pleasant location, clean, airy streets, and quiet, healthy inhabitants.

The removal was made with less of fatigue to the invalid than was feared, and the itinerant family settled down in a new home of hope and happiness.

Mr. Willard was a man who looked upon and into the peculiar system of our Church with the eye of a philosopher as well as a Christian. He believed that no one minister was competent to preach to every order of mind. Individuals forming a society for a long time

become in a manner a type of each other, and especially a type of their leaders, whether social, political, or religious. In such societies a few principles are fostered, while others are totally neglected ; but by a change of spiritual teachers every essential truth is likely to be developed and established. He fully believed in the itinerancy, that it was of God's own appointment, established by the example of the apostles, and never a failure when its principles are carried out in letter as in spirit.

With these views he studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed. As a skillful husbandman analyzes the soil on which he labors, to discover its necessary aliment, so did this workman analyze the moral field to ascertain how to divide the word of truth.

We will now continue our narrative with a few more extracts from *Maria's Journal*.

“ I feel that I am laid under renewed obligations to the Father of mercies for bringing me to this place. I seem to imbibe health and

gladness with every breeze. There is a Sabbath-like quiet in the place that invites to repose. The Church seems consistent and happy, and there is union and perfect harmony with sister Churches. We have been graciously received by all classes; a proof, Walter says, that his predecessor walked worthily before them. I hope that nothing may occur to dissolve this kind fraternal bond.

“There is nothing I so much deplore as jealousies and rivalries among Christians. It seems to me it is Satan’s last most potent device to prevent the influences of the Gospel. . . .

“I have had a happy surprise. Yesterday some young girls called to take Emily out for a walk. I was happy to let her go, and sat down in the nursery with the babe. I could not exercise the little fellow as he was accustomed to, and had to try my vocal powers.

“Commencing the song Walter composed, I sang it through as I have not sung before for more than a year. Baby sat up in his crib, and stared with his great thoughtful eyes as though

he thought me crazy. When I had finished I heard a light step in the parlor, and in stepped Sister Wright, of S——, her dear old face all covered with tears and smiles. She heard my voice, and would not come in till I had finished. I rang for husband, and we spent a happy afternoon in the nursery, for on no account would she allow me take baby to the parlor.

“ Sister Wright is in poor health, and has come to pass the summer with a sister, leaving her family to the care of her son James, who was recently married. I promise myself great pleasure from having her so near. Indeed, it seems to me that I have comparatively nothing to do but enjoy the blessings of God.

“ Walter expresses the same feelings.

“ Perhaps our heavenly Father is holding the adversary in check till we have received a little more strength; or perhaps we have proved ourselves unworthy of suffering for the sake of Christ. And yet our Father knoweth that we do not covet luxurious ease in any way. . . .

“ I am longing to take my place in the Sab-

bath school, but husband will not permit. I am sure he is right; but O how I wish to do something in the cause of Christ! My heart yearns over the little ones. I hear their merry voices in the street, and they gladden my spirits.

“While I was writing the last sentence two little girls, apparently about eight years of age, came in. One was a lively, blue-eyed girl, with bold laughing eyes, and very energetic in appearance. The other was dark-complexioned, pale and thoughtful looking, with a sort of weary step, not a bit like her companion. I asked them to sit down, and just hinted that I did not know their names.

“‘My name is Agnes Pike,’ said the blue-eyed one, ‘and this is Sarah Porter. We want to see the minister, if you please.’

“‘The minister,’ said I, in surprise, ‘is absent, and you will have to call again, unless I can answer as well.’

“Agnes looked at her companion, and then at me, to see, perhaps, what she thought of confiding in me, and at length said,

“ ‘ Do you think the Lord is coming ? ’

“ I was more surprised than ever, for though we had heard of the new Miller theory, it had not been agitated among our people, and I was hardly prepared for an answer. At last I said, that it was impossible for us to tell about it, and it was only necessary to be good, and then it would be no matter when the Lord came for us.

“ ‘ That’s what grandpa says,’ replied Agnes; ‘ he is a very old man, Mrs. Willard, and don’t feel particular; but Sarah is not happy. She won’t help plant our pretty flower-seeds, nor does she like to play. She is afraid the Lord will come, and she often cries about it.’

“ ‘ Why Sarah,’ said I, ‘ you would not be afraid of the Lord Jesus, for he loves little children.’

“ ‘ I told her so,’ replied Agnes, ‘ and I don’t think he will spoil this pretty world so soon. I mean to make it as nice as I can, and then if he should happen to come may be he would stay a while. O how I would like to have him round among us ! ’

“I told the little girls that the Saviour could do far more for them where he now was, and they might learn to love and trust him. I then told them that they might visit me on Saturday afternoon, and we would talk about the Saviour, and learn to love him.

“Little Sarah brightened very much, and for the first time spoke, promising to come, and she walked away much more bright and cheerful than when she came.

“I think there are few in the Christian Church who understand the spiritual longings of childhood. I believe with more of faith and skillful effort scores of little children might be brought into the Christian Church to go no more out forever. When will she learn to secure the lambs before they have strayed from the inclosure of Christ? when learn to guide the infant tendrils, and fasten them on holy things before they have entwined around the vanities of earth? My Saviour in heaven, let me prove my love by feeding thy lambs!”

CHAPTER XX.

Feed my lambs.— JOHN xvi, 15.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.—ROMANS xiii, 12.

SCARCELY had the little girls left the door of the pastor before he entered. They had gone down street, and he had come from above, so that the parties had not met.

“Were those children in here, Maria?” inquired Mr. Willard, on entering.

Maria said “Yes,” and told their errand. Mr. Willard was amused and interested, approved her plan of asking them to call, and then returned to his first thought.

“That little girl in the blue frock is the very image of some one I have known.”

He had noticed her in church and in Sabbath school, and wished he knew her name.

“Her name is Agnes Pike,” said Mrs. Willard, “and she is a most engaging child.”

"Then she is the daughter of Agnes Lindsey,* the lady who entertained me the first night I was on my first circuit. I will call on her to-morrow," said Mr. Willard.

Accordingly the next day the pastor and his lady found out the abode of Mr. Pike. At the door they were met by the little girl, who led them to the sitting-room, exclaiming, "Mother; mother, here is the minister and lady!"

One glance at the matronly woman was enough. It was indeed the same kind Agnes, who from girlhood had ministered to the wants of the servants of God, and as she came forward with a babe in her arms, and extended her disengaged left hand with a face radiant with smiles, blushes, and tears, Maria thought her a most lovely woman. Her greeting to Mrs. Willard was no less cordial.

"I knew," said she, "who it was that had come to Swanton, and had it not been for this little fellow [glancing at her nestling] should

* See the *Itinerant*.

have found you out. My father is all impatience to see you."

Just at that moment Father Lindsey threw open an inner door, and came hobbling out. The old gentleman was nearly eighty years of age, infirm, and trembling with weakness: moreover his organs of vision had become dim, so that he could hardly discern the presence of strangers.

"Look here, father," said Mrs. Pike, and the old man knew by her cheery voice that a friend was with them.

"Father Lindsey," said Mr. Willard, rising to meet the old gentleman.

"I thank my God that I hear that voice again," and the aged pilgrim leaned upon the top of his staff, in the attitude of a worshiping patriarch.

It was a pleasant interview that the pastor had with his friends. He learned that the husband of Mrs. Pike was one of the fruits of his first itinerant labors. He was commander of a small coasting vessel, and was absent on a sea voyage.

Mrs. Willard learned that the companion of little Agnes was the daughter of an indigent widow in poor health and in low spirits, and then she was able to account for the pale, sad countenance of the child.

"You will call on her, Brother Willard," said Mrs. Pike in a persuasive voice; but before there was time for reply the voice of the pilgrim was again heard.

"To be sure he will, my daughter, for therefore was he sent and anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, and preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised."

Never had those familiar words sounded so solemn and full of meaning as when rehearsed in that deep, trembling voice, and with those almost sightless eye-balls fixed upon the servant of God. To Mr. Willard it seemed like a renewal of his sacred mission.

The next Saturday Mrs. Willard had her sitting-room filled with little girls. It was a

lovely afternoon, and the children seemed like uncaged birds. Little Walter had to be brought in, and almost smothered with kisses, and then they sat down and conversed with the lady.

On the table stood a vase of flowers, and from them she drew much instructive remark. With the little girls she examined the sweet blossoms, explained how they opened their soft petals to the sunshine and the dew, and how they shrank from the wind and the storm.

Then she brought them shells from foreign shores, and explained that they had once been dwelling-places for little animals; and the children admired their beauty and wonderful formation.

Skillfully, and with gentle tact, she drew them on to the contemplation of the infinite Maker of all. From his works they were led to wonder at his wisdom and his power. His love and care for his creatures was the next theme for remark, the Divine mission of the Saviour being the crowning proof.

Mrs. Willard's manner and conversation were

well adapted to such minds, and while she went on, relating incidents in the life of the Redeemer of man, the little girls one by one left their seats and clustered around her, crouching at her feet in infantile attitudes. She told them of those who brought little children unto the Saviour, and of the disciples who rebuked them.

“What does that mean?” asked one.

“Why, that they scolded them for fetching the children,” said Agnes Pike; “but they got the rebuke back again, didn’t they, Mrs. Willard?”

“Yes; and the Saviour took the children in his arms and blessed them, and exhorted his disciples to be like them. And now don’t these little girls love such a Saviour?”

Most of the girls thought they did. Sarah Porter said, with a sad look, that she didn’t know; but Agnes answered that she was not acquainted with Him; “she wished, O she wished that she was.”

Mrs. Willard tried to explain that by faith she might come to a knowledge of Christ.

But the child insisted that she could not love him much without knowing him.

"I hope he will come," said she with earnestness; "I am not a bit afraid of his spoiling this nice world, and it would be so pleasant to have the Saviour here. Don't you think so?"

After that day the children met their minister's wife as often as her health would permit, and it became a very great treat to the little ones. All seemed interested, and it was said by the sisters of the Church, that no punishment for a fault was so severe as depriving them of that privilege.

And while Mrs. Willard was proving her love to the Lord, by doing what she could in his service, the precious seed had begun to germinate in the young minds she was molding. She was made aware of the fact by the changed appearance of the two little girls who first called at her house. Agnes and Sarah seemed gradually to be changing characters. The former grew pensive and thoughtful, while the latter became cheerful and happy in appear-

ance. It was not till they had met many times that the kind teacher ventured to ask them about their feelings, and then Sarah frankly acknowledged that she was not afraid now for she loved the Lord Jesus, and her countenance bore testimony to her words.

As for Agnes, she had grown shy and reserved, and it was with difficulty that Mrs. Willard could speak with her. After a time she acknowledged that she longed to love her Saviour, but how could she when he was so far off, and she feared he would not come, and she should never, *never* rest till he had taken her in his arms and blessed her as he did the children of old.

When Mrs. Willard tried to explain that Jesus was still on earth in the person of the Comforter, that he had his abode in the hearts of men, and she might carry all her griefs to him, the child burst into tears, and unconsciously using the language of Scripture, exclaimed:

“O that I knew where I might find him!”

Meantime Mr. Willard, who had like a faith-

ful watchman stood continually on the watch-tower, began to discover signs of a coming contest in the Church. There had been through the last few weeks a rallying of her strength and a beating up for recruits. She had seen the conversion of a few souls, and the reclaiming of backsliders. These were to be fed with milk and not with meat, while the older members were to be thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of Christ. He knew now why it was that the Lord had permitted him a season of comparative rest; it was a renewal of strength for coming need. With these convictions the minister of God and faithful soldier of his Captain entered into the armory of the Lord to prepare his weapons of defense. His whole armor was to be examined; thank Heaven it was not rusty from disuse, but was whole and entire. O how he lingered over each *piece*!

The girdle of *truth*; yes, it was to be a girdle that it might encircle and environ the whole moral and spiritual man. The breastplate of

righteousness; yes, that was complete, and on it, in crimson characters, was inscribed the name of Jesus. Were his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and his head protected by the glorious helmet of salvation? And, above all, had he the sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith? for not against flesh and blood was he to wrestle, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

CHAPTER XXI.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders ; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.—MATTHEW xxiv, 24.

WHEN the summer had passed, and the autumnal winds began to sigh along the rock-bound shore, the great Advent cry burst upon the people of Swanton. For many months they had heard it in the distance, and hearts who loved not the appearing of our Lord had begun to fail them for fear. But now it was brought very near. Heralds of the new gospel went forth with renewed zeal and flaming charts to assist the imagination, boldly declaring that the Lord was at hand. Lukewarm Christians roused themselves from their day-dream, and essayed to light the lamps, in which, alas ! there was no oil ; while timid, loving hearts, who had long mourned their absence from the Lord,

were led by their ardent longings to embrace the new faith.

Not only the weak and wavering became converts to this faith, but many who were regarded as pillars in the Christian Church, those whose influence was widely extended. Such still retained their influence, and drew many more from their allegiance to the Church.

So great was the prevailing mania in Swanton, that very soon the Church divided. The Second Advent people withdrew and worshiped in an adjacent school-house, where their extravagant zeal soon became an annoyance to sober-minded people.

With them worshiped good Sister Wright and Mrs. Porter, the mother of the little girl who, through the influence of Mrs. Willard, had learned to love the Saviour.

Mrs. Pike hardly knew whether to permit little Agnes to attend with them or not, such was the state of her mind, but at length concluded to come to a gentle compromise in the

matter, occasionally permitting her to go, and yet instructing her in the faith of the Church.

As for the pastor, his situation was peculiarly trying. Every effort to stop the tide of error was regarded by the enthusiastic as persecution for righteousness' sake, and under the prevailing excitement seemed to add strength to the enthusiasts.

After a series of sermons, in which Mr. Willard proved from revelation that the new system was incorrect, else the Gospel which had been sent to men at so great an expense must prove a comparative failure in the world, he went quietly about his own business, caring for the flock that was left, and inviting the stranger to the fold of Christ.

"It is all that we can do, Maria," said he one day to his wife; "God will vindicate his own cause, and can bring good out of this great seeming evil."

Mrs. Willard did not reply, and on looking up her husband saw that she had been weeping.

"Are you ill, wife?" said he with earnestness; "or do these things trouble you?"

"O, I am so sad, Walter; only look at that," and she handed him a letter—a mammoth sheet closely written on every page. Mr. Willard glanced at the signature. It was Brother Donald's, and the good man trembled and flushed to his brow at the thought of what was the subject of such an elaborate epistle. Nor was he mistaken in his conjecture; that beloved brother and his wife were bold, avowed Second Adventists.

And O with what earnest eloquence did he defend his views, and with what affectionate entreaty did he warn his dear sister and husband not to be disobedient to the holy vision! O how he deplored his former benighted state, wrapped in the night of popular error, patiently or rather sluggishly waiting the universal triumph of the Gospel, the conversion of the heathen, the diffusion of liberty and equal rights, and spiritual blessings, over all the earth, almost till the very hour of the personal appear-

ing of our King, the resurrection of the dead, and the glorification of the righteous in the kingdom of God. Then followed a long exposition of the vision of Daniel, and its fulfillment. "Still," said the writer, "I might have slumbered, had it not been for the power of God, which was as manifest in my conversion as in that of a Paul. Whether in the body or not, God knoweth, but I had a direct manifestation of the will of God to me. My brother and sister, I have seen my Lord; I have looked upon the seventh angel with his seventh trumpet, all ready to be blown,* at which the kingdoms of this earth are to be given to our Lord, and he shall reign forever."

But what need of following the arguments of those who were deceived but for a season. Their history is written in the annals of the Church, and their errors are blotted out by tears of repentance.

The last paragraph was what, more than all the rest, filled them with dismay. It ran thus:

* This is substantially a fact.

“Mrs. Donald and I have decided to visit you, for we are very anxious that you should become partakers of this glorious faith. My dear sister, what could you not do with your gentle, persuasive gifts. Your husband, too; why, together you might light your whole district with holy fire, as by the grace of God we mean to light ours. And every moment is precious. But farewell; the rest will I set in order when I come, which will be very soon, for I wish to return to my people to go forth with them to meet the Bridegroom.”

Brother Donald came, and O what a scene! He fully believed that the church ought to be thrown open for him to preach the new existing theory. The old, steadfast brethren said “*No*,” and their pastor fully approved their decision.

What wonder that Mrs. Willard was almost heart-broken when Brother Donald and wife took their baggage to the house of one of his brethren in the faith, and preached for these people.

"O it is sad to think that I should be glad to part with such friends!"

This was said by Mrs. Willard after the Donalds had left, merely calling to give them a hasty "good-by" in parting.

"It would be very grievous, my dear," replied her husband, "if there were a particle of self-reproach mingled with your sorrow."

"I have not that," said she; "for not for worlds would I have offended them."

"Let that be your consolation, my dear, that you are suffering wrongfully; and remember if you take it patiently it is acceptable with God."

"I know it, Walter," replied she; "but what is to become of the Church when shorn of such strength?"

"My dear Maria, our God is the strength of the Church. He will not suffer it to be destroyed by its enemy, or permit a single trial that will not result in good. This is only one of the conflicts foreseen and provided for by its great Head. Let us not be dismayed, but trust entirely in God."

Maria smiled and said: "You don't know, Walter, how it relieves my anxiety to have you so hopeful and trusting."

"And why should I not be so?" said he. "I should be a poor pupil not to learn hope and trust from the example of my little wife, who in dividing my every care has always insisted on having the largest share."

And with mutual love and confidence they turned to other themes.

God shall be with thee, as the cloud
Hung brightly o'er each wandering tribe;
By day a dark and rayless shroud,
By night a glorious beacon guide.

Even thus around thy shielded head
The cloudy pillar lingers still,
And still its cheering rays doth shed,
To guide thee from each dreaded ill.

And when the shades of death roll up,
And bid thee walk that fearful road,
May faith unwavering quaff the cup
That bears the spirit home to God.

CHAPTER XXII.

Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.—MATTHEW xxiv, 24.

MR. WILLARD was reappointed to Swanton, that being the wish of both pastor and people. The Miller excitement had not in the least abated, unless the languor into which some had fallen, and which was the result of overwrought minds, could be called an abatement. But from that state the Church augured no good. It seemed like the heavy doze of a diseased patient, in which the fever is gathering strength for a renewed combat.

It was now 1843, that year for which (thus said the prophets) all other years were made; and though the panic was less, it was pitiful to see the pale, anxious faces, and the listless goings to and fro, to beguile the weary days as they marched on their steady course. Time had been when they had flown by day and night in

quick succession, as though each were treading on the heels of the other; but now how laggard! As the spring advanced the sun would roll slowly up, as though it would keep pace with the tardy husbandmen in the vicinity of Swanton, and regretted to waste its fertilizing rays on fields untilled and unsown; for, in consistency with their faith, those poor weary-of-the-worlds had thrown aside all secular employment, save that which was necessary to their daily eating and drinking.

Such being the case, the Church at Swanton felt that no one could guide them through the crisis like their present pastor. And they judged rightly. Carefully disciplining his own mind, and wisely choosing his words, he had managed to keep the confidence of the enthusiasts, so that many of them still lingered round the Church, preferring the clear spiritual sermons of their minister to the unsatisfying ministrations of transient brethren in the faith. In their social sympathies they clung to him, for Mr. Willard was one of those who respected the

opinions of every person. He felt that one's honest faith was personal property; with which he had no right to meddle. Hence he never descended to the pulpit abuse of any doctrines, and never, however great the temptation, indulged a witticism at their expense. He felt that it was incompatible with the dignity of the pulpit, and with that holy zeal for the Church in which he labored. Those who sinned he rebuked before all, that others might fear; but not for a simple error of the head, recently born of circumstances acting on a peculiar state of the mind, was a long-tried member to be destroyed.

"No, no," he would say; "let us use the wholesome truths of the Gospel, and the soothing oil of forbearance and love. If that does not cure those sick members nothing will."

And in the end it proved according to his plain common-sense prediction; and when does religion violate the rules of reason? But first there was a season of fiery trial to the Church, when its healthy members needed all their

decision and steadfastness to enable them to stand.

As time moved on the poor, misguided enthusiasts gathered renewed zeal in their cause, and began to utter the soul-stirring cry, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, for behold the signs of his coming."

There was in Swanton and its vicinity a heavy drought that year. The sun came up day after day like a ball of fire, throwing its sickly, lurid rays through the smoky atmosphere to the parched and yellow earth. This was interpreted as a gradual darkening before the great and terrible day of the Lord, and wise men had discovered spots in the moon, which, to their morbid imaginations, soon became broad.

Other signs there were in the heavens and earth. In many places there were meteoric showers, and the aurora borealis shone and flashed as it never did before. There were times when the sea was in great commotion from no visible cause, and there were said to

be groanings in the caverns of the earth, as though nature were convulsed with agony.

A few extracts from Maria's journal will give the reader an idea how the family at the parsonage spent the summer.

"We find it almost impossible to keep our minds calm and unaffected by the prevailing excitement. Scarcely a day passes that Walter is not called upon to minister to some diseased mind or depressed spirit. Besides this it is very sickly. I have opened my sitting-room for the reception of the little girls again. Few, however, come, owing to the prevailing epidemic.

"Little Agnes Pike is in feeble health, but still talks of the coming of the Saviour to love and bless young children. Her mother is very anxious, but cheerful. I have never seen a woman that I admire, love, and respect as I do Sister Pike. She is a host in strength. Not only does she have the entire care of her young family, as also of her blind and paralytic father, but Mrs. Porter and her little girl are depend-

ent on her for almost everything. Mrs. Porter is little short of being a maniac from her nervous apprehension. And I never saw such a face to chase shadows as Sister Pike's. Even baby knows her musical voice, and sets up a great laugh when he hears it.

* * * * *

"A great calamity has befallen us. Surely the Lord has come in a way that we did not expect. Last evening Sister Wright spent with us. Her health improved so much last summer that she and her husband came down for a few months' sojourn this season. She seemed so bright and cheerful, and withal so free from excitement, that I thought perhaps she had abandoned the Advent theory. Walter thought so too, and remarked on our good fortune in meeting her so often, and hoped our next appointment might again bring us together.

"I shall never forget her quiet smile as she turned her calm eye on Walter, saying:

"'I think it will, my brother, never more to part.'

“‘Then your faith is unchanged, Sister Wright?’ asked Walter.

“‘So much that I was sorry to leave home,’ she replied; ‘and so much that I would gladly return home to-morrow if husband were willing.’

“Mr. Wright walked out with Walter, and while they were absent Sister Wright read the twenty-first chapter of Luke in very solemn tones.

“When she and her husband had bade us good-night and gone out, she turned back to shake hands with Walter, and then she kissed me with great affection. It made a strange impression on my mind, and when this morning Walter said that Brother Wright was coming, I went to the door with husband to meet him.

“One glance at his pale face was enough, even if he had not murmured in that trembling voice:

“‘She is gone!’

“After Brother Wright had become composed, he told us that his wife had retired the

night before, as usual, to spend a season in private devotion. When he entered the room she was kneeling, with her head bowed on the Bible. After a time he wondered at her quiet attitude, and going to her, found that she was cold and lifeless.

“Said he: ‘She was loth to come, and now to take her back thus, it will break poor Georgie’s heart.’

“What could we do for the poor man? Words seemed but as hollow mockery, and so we sat and wept together like bereaved children, and then we walked over to look at the precious remains.

“There she lay in her night robes, looking so calm and peaceful that I could hardly believe that gentle voice was forever hushed.

“Brother Wright has gone with the precious remains of his beloved wife; and O thou Comforter, go with him, and graciously sustain the bereaved family in their coming sorrow.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with her seed.—REVELATION xii, 17.

And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.—JOHN ix, 37.

ONE morning there appeared at the door of the parsonage a woman dressed in the garb of poverty, and bearing in her arms a stout, lusty infant, apparently of six months' growth. The broad, pitted face of the mother bore evidence of health and exercise, but on it was an expression of woe-begone anxiety almost ludicrous to behold. Emily went to the door, and in answer to the question whether the *praste* was at home, invited her in, and called Mr. Willard.

“Are ye the praste, sir?” asked the woman, still standing, and endeavoring to hush the baby.

Mr. Willard told her that he was a minister,

and setting a chair, he asked her to be seated, and tell him what she wanted.

"Well, sir," said the woman, "I will tell ye all, and then ye'll know what I would do, and may be—" (here she looked dubiously at the pastor, and spoke in a low voice,) "ye will *absolve* me."

"No," said Walter; "I am a Protestant, and make no pretensions to forgiving sin."

"Well, don't be angry, sir, for I ain just kilt with the throuble of me. Ye see I was a Catholic in the old country, and had thirty-four beads, and knew a prayer to each of them. I wore a crucifix in my bosom, and went to the praste once a month, and so you see that if I was wicked a bit I could get along very well."

"And were you very wicked?" asked Mr. Willard.

"I wasn't particular, your riverence, for paying nearly all my wages for my religion, I wanted some good of it."

"And what do you want now, madam?"

"Well, sir, I came to this country and mar-



LOOKING FOR A PRIEST.

ried Jemmy O'Kennel, who was a born Protestant. He drove the praste from the door, and said we had got to bear our own sins; but O, sir, they are a weary load, come to score them up."

"I should think so, my good woman, and should advise you to confess to God."

"That's what I don't dare do, your riverence."

"It is all you can do, poor woman, and God is very merciful," said the minister.

"But I don't know him at all, your riverence. I used to pray to the holy virgin, and all the holy saints that I knew, but I niver knew that Son of the virgin, nor that greater One, niver at all."

The poor woman swayed backward and forward in a manner expressive of grief and perplexity, while the minister tried to explain the doctrines of faith and repentance, atonement and justification, striving to bring them to the capacity of the poor woman.

"Can you read?" he asked.

“Niver a bit, but Jemmy can.”

“And have you a Bible?”

The woman said they had not.

“If I give you one, will he read it to you?”

“Sure and he will, if that will comfort me, for I’m a great grief to him in my wailings.”

“Is your husband anxious about his sins?” asked Mr. Willard.

“I think he is a little; he says it is a wicked world for the Lord to come into. Do you think, sir, the judgment-day is near?”

Mr. Willard took a Bible, and turned to Matthew xxiv, 36, and read: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.”

“You see that we know nothing about it, Mrs. O’Kennel; but it is of importance that we are prepared to meet the Lord at any time. Take this book,” continued Mr. Willard, “and read it together, and learn to pray this prayer;” and he turned to that taught by our Saviour, and marked the place.

The woman was overwhelmed with gratitude. Drawing from her bosom a dirty rag, she unwrapped a small piece of coin, and tendered it to him, saying: "Take that, your reverence, and may the blessed Virgin and all the saints—"

Mr. Willard interrupted her: "Stop, my good woman; when you pray for me, it must be to my heavenly Father, and in the name of Christ. I don't think those people you name know me, and should not be sure that a prayer lodged with them would be answered."

"I'll remember," said she, looking lovingly at the book and the mark; "but please take this, and I will make it more next time."

"No, I thank you, Mrs. O'Kennel; put up your money for your own needs. The Gospel is free to all," said the minister; and the poor woman gathered up her sleeping babe and departed, invoking blessings from the "Great One" on a holy praste that could live without money.

We just tarry to say that Jemmy O'Kennel

and his smart, energetic wife, became interested in the truths of the Gospel, and eventually came to an experimental knowledge of Christ.

The next year there was in the Irish neighborhood where they lived a little class of praying souls, and ever after Mr. Willard cherished a deep interest for those wrapped in the midnight darkness of Romanism, and he felt that it was an *evil* toward which the Church should have an eye of vigilance.

October came. It was the month to which the enthusiasts in Swanton pointed as the time of the consummation of their hopes and fears. As the day drew near there was a mysterious preparation of ascension robes, and poor Mrs. Porter stitched, stitched as though she were working her own weary life into the strange garments. Little Agnes would steal away from home, and sit hours on a low stool, watching the finishing of one after another of those mystic robes, pale and cold as though they were her own grave-clothes; and when her mother would take her away she would weep,

and wonder if the Saviour would surely come, little heeding the faith-fraught counsels of her good parent.

"We can do nothing for them," said Mrs. Pike one day to the pastor's wife. "We can do nothing but keep them alive till the day is past, and then, perhaps, they will be restored to their right minds."

"I have asked Mrs. Porter to stay with me till midnight, when she means to join the people on the Golden Mountain, where they expect to meet their Lord."

"And what will you do with Agnes?" asked Mrs. Willard. "You will not permit that frail child to go out?"

"By no means. I shall soothe her to sleep, and hope she will be in quiet slumbers for the night. That past, I think, Sister Willard, that we shall be able to win the dear lamb into the spiritual fold of the Saviour."

Mrs. Willard spoke encouraging words to the kind-hearted woman as she left.

"What a treasure is such a woman to the

Church," said she, after relating their interview to her husband.

"She is a treasure to the world," replied he; "that is, to any portion of it she blesses with her presence."

And so she was a ministering angel to any who came under her influence. After running hither and thither to look after the poor children who were that eventful night to be deserted by their infatuated parents, Mrs. Pike took home the poor widow and her daughter, to watch them for the night.

At ten the aged grandfather and the little ones were all in quiet slumbers. They had each repeated a prayer, and the little extra taught them by the old gentleman, and fully believed that if they died before they waked the Lord would take their souls to himself.

All but little Agnes, the faithless one. A gentle, loving child she was; her mother and Mrs. Willard believed that she loved the Saviour; but in her doubtings she was a very Thomas.

"O mother, do you think he will come?" said she, giving her good-night kiss.

"I think he will come to my little girl," replied her mother, "and in his own way, my darling."

"O, but I can never believe unless I can see him, and feel him with my hands."

At last she too fell asleep, and Mrs. Pike sat alone with her poor neighbor. There was a purple flush on her wan cheek, and a wild fiery glare in her sunken eye. She would not permit the doors to be closed, and kept walking to and fro, listening and watching. The night had come in dark and stormy, and now as the rain pattered against the windows, or the wind whistled over the chimney, she would start in nervous terror. Mrs. Pike took the Bible, and read one portion after another of soothing promise, till the excited woman grew calm, and sat down. Then a heavy languor stole over her, and in weariness she bowed her head on the bed where Agnes slept and slumbered.

When the bright sunbeams had stolen softly

into the room, and were silently chasing the shadows from every nook and cranny therein, the matrons were roused from their late sleep by the cheerful voice of Agnes, saying: "O mother, He did come; he came in my sleep; he took me in his arms, and I felt his hand on my head. I knew him for my Saviour, and he told me he would come again and take me to himself. Mother, I am glad he is up there, and I love him just as well;" and Agnes had to explain to Mrs. Porter how beautiful Jesus was, and what a heavenly light there was round his head, and how softly he spoke.

At breakfast the little girl had to tell it all over again to grandpa, and the old gentleman answered her much after the manner of the Saviour to his unbelieving disciple: "Because thou hast seen thou believest; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet believe."

We have not time to tell of the poor, disappointed enthusiasts, or to follow them in their sad wakings from a delusive dream, and how one by one a few of them came back to the

Church, sad, distracted in doctrine, and weakened in confidence, while others became as "clouds that are without water, trees whose fruit withereth; raging waves of the sea, or wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

O what a shadow rests on the apostate from the Church of Christ! Let us pass lightly over it, leaving brighter tints in our tracings. That cloud has passed away, and there is in Swanton a goodly company who have not defiled their garments; of which little Agnes, now a bright-eyed, blooming matron, is a worthy member.

CHAPTER XXIV.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.—ECCLESIASTES iii, 1.

It was the first day of May, 1844, that a group of young men and maidens in the village of —port might have been seen very early wending their way up the long back road that led to what was called Blue Ridge, the name of a little grove above the newly incorporated city. Not that the young people expected to find flowers, for in our bleak New England climate “April showers” rarely bring forth “May flowers” in season for *Mayday*. But there were evergreens, though some of them were, as Kitty Karlton said, turned yellow, and there were mosses, and twigs, and dry leaves, and well-wintered burrs, besides a thousand things which had not wintered quite so well.

“Why is this called Blue Ridge?” asked one.

“Because the students come here when they have the blues,” said Charley Edwards.

“And leave them here, eh? I should think the ridge would be blue, being such a scape-goat.”

George Clifford was the tallest lad, and he fancied that Kate was the prettiest girl. He liked to carry her basket, and seemed to think that gave him exclusive right to her; but Charles said he might as well try to monopolize the bird-song, or the sunbeams, for Katy would not be tamed.

And so it seemed, when George called her to sit down and teach him to plait a wreath “for her fair brow.”

“But where are your flowers, Mr. Clifford?” said the willful girl; “we must have some, at least some little buds.”

“No need of flowers on such rosy ladies,” said Clifford. “See, Miss Kate, what a basket of green.”

“And no need of *green* among such *verdant* beaux,” retorted Katy.

“Then of what shall we make our wreaths?”

This sally produced a hearty laugh, during which Charley Edwards brought forward a long wreath, delicately and skillfully wrought, and taking off Kate's hat, tied it round her head, making large loops to hang beside her face, in which he had woven a few flowers of the trailing arbutus, purloined from his sister's bouquet.

"The queen! the queen!" shouted the group, and Charley retired a few steps and knelt before her, saying, "Your behest, gracious queen."

The lady tore a sprig from her wreath, and inserting it in the band of her knight's hat, placed it on his bared head; then turning round, asked if there were no others that would promise fealty to their sovereign. Others bowed before the May queen; among them was George Clifford, and each received his badge of knighthood.

Commands were then given that the baskets should all be filled, for the queen would hold a grand levee in honor of some distinguished strangers.

When they left the woods the queen walked in front of the procession, with her arm linked in that of Ellen Mayo, a quiet, gentle girl, whom Kate said was her "prime minister," though no one present could tell when she was chosen. Beside the ladies walked the two knights, Charley and George, at such a distance that the queen and her minister could talk in low tones without being heard. To judge by the earnestness of those tones, there was something more than a farce in their deliberations, and some perplexity involved.

"I wish we had thought of it before," said Ellen.

"Time enough; we have only to march the procession down 'Church-street,' where I will make a speech," said Kate.

Accordingly the party followed the four leaders till they came in front of a neat white house, newly painted, and bearing on the door-plate these words: "Methodist Parsonage."

Here they halted, and rallied round their queen, who, with a very gracious demeanor,

informed her loyal subjects that there was coming to their kingdom a “stranger, purporting to be ambassador from a very high court, and she purposed to receive him there. It was her pleasure that her subjects should prepare that *hotel* for the evening levee, where she would meet them at five o’clock.”

A burst of applause gave proof of the loyalty of her subjects, and the party separated for the purpose of making preparations for their evening fete.

“O Kate, what have you done?” burst from two or three of the girls; “and how can we get ready? and what will our mothers say? and—”

“Stop, stop, and let me answer those three questions first,” replied Kate; “and, first, I have decided to have a supper against the minister arrives; secondly, I think if we work half as hard as we have played this morning, we can each of us prepare food for herself and say three other persons, which will be more than we shall want; thirdly, We must each

settle with our mammas according to our own skill and address. I know beforehand the programme of my settlement. Mother will scold and fret, but by the time I have tied on my apron and rolled up my sleeves she will be on hand with her offers of assistance. I shan't let her, though, for it tires her to work. I shall make a loaf of cake and a mold of blanc-mange all myself," and the little gipsy tore off her wreath and wound it round her hat for safe keeping, saying, "No more queening till evening."

The other girls were not to be outdone by Kate, and so they made out on the spot a bill of fare, in which each was to have an item, or more, as they chose or had means, after which they went to their respective homes.

Meanwhile the young gentlemen were wreathing a May-pole just without the yard of the parsonage; but now that their bright-eyed queen was not present, their loyalty was not so manifest.

"Just one of Kate's mad projects," said

William Haskill; "like as not the minister will scold us for our pains."

"Then you are expecting a scolding minister, Will?" said Charley Edwards, who was kneeling on the grass preparing one of his delicate wreaths, and fitting it to his white pocket-handkerchief.

"There is more than one way to scold at people," muttered Haskill.

"Of course there is; but in what way do parsons scold their people?"

"One way is by wearing such long faces," replied Haskill.

"Ministers don't make their own faces, Will."

"But they make them long," said Haskill. "And then they are so disagreeable in conversation, always saying things in the wrong place."

"I'm sure our last preacher said nothing disagreeable," Charley answered.

"He never said anything; I scarcely ever heard him speak out of the pulpit."

"Brother D. was social," said Clifford.

"Social with a vengeance," replied Haskill. "That man ought never to come out of the pulpit; he ought to have his living served to him there. I never hated a good man before, and if I have a millstone hung about my neck and am drowned in the depth of the sea for my offenses, that man will have to answer for it."

"Why, Will, what did he do? I once heard him say that youth, meaning you, was not far from the kingdom of heaven," and Charley looked surprised.

"Well, I think I was somewhat religiously affected, for that was the prevailing epidemic. I was attending school, and many of the students were taken with it. One day I came home to dinner, when it was announced that the butter was out, and I was dispatched for a pound in great haste. As I was speeding along the wind robbed me of its paper cover, leaving it all exposed to the rays of the sun, and just then Brother D. crossed the street and began to talk to me about my soul. I think he kept

me a full half hour. People were passing, and each one stared at me and then at my butter. I tell you we had rather a melting time."

The boys laughed.

"That, I suppose, was being instant out of season," said Charley.

"And for that," replied Haskill, "he was never again in season to catch me."

By this time the pole was dressed, and Charley had prepared a little banner, with the motto, "Welcome, Pastor," and at last the young gents separated till they should meet the ladies in the evening.

CHAPTER XXV.

There is . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh ; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.—*ECCLESIASTES* iii, 1, 4.

It was a glorious evening. Not a cloud in the soft blue heavens except, as a negro once said, a “few baskets of picked cotton” in the east, and those were dyed a pale pink, that changed every moment in their floatings. The broad river flowed lazily along, calm and placid as though it loved to reflect those fleecy clouds, and rather enjoyed the quiet of the hour. Already there had collected on the wharf at ——port hacks, drays, and carts, with their respective drivers, in expectation of the steamer, whose warning whistle had just been heard.

As the old “Charter Oak” came wheezing and puffing up to the landing, there might have been seen a tall, dark-complexioned man, leaning over the side with an expression of pleasant interest.

Totally disregarding the scores of whips pointed to him, and the clamorous cries of "Coach," "Carriage," that rose on every hand, the gentleman continued to gaze upon the wharf, his eye wandering from one face to another. At last his countenance brightened as he bowed to a person on the shore; then turning to a lady who sat near amusing a restless child, he said:

"Brother Mayo, my dear."

And very soon there came stealing along the passage that same Brother Mayo, who with hearty greetings exclaimed: "I am glad to see you, Brother and Sister Willard!"

And the weary travelers responded with heartfelt gratitude.

"And now, Brother Willard," said the newcomer, "I will take you and Mrs. Willard up, and then return for your maid and baggage. Give me the little one, and look to your lady's steps, for our wharf is rough."

But baby was tired and cross, and did not incline to trust strangers, so the father took

him, and the gentleman gave his arm to Mrs. Willard, and together they left the boat.

“Can we go home at once?” asked the lady.

“If you wish, ma’am, but I must forewarn you that you will not be alone there. Our young people started this morning on a May-party, and during their walk decided to hold a festival in honor of your coming. There are a score of them at the parsonage awaiting you.”

The minister and lady were too much surprised to speak immediately, and the brother went on:

“But if you are too tired to meet them, let me take you at once to our house, and send them word.”

“No, not by any means,” said Mr. Willard; and so said the lady, though she looked rather deprecatingly at their traveling garments.

Accordingly they rode round through the short streets of the village, and soon came to Church-street, where, but a few rods from the parsonage, they were met by the merry group,

each adorned with some sylvan badge, and bearing in their hands some selection from the green woodland.

Foremost walked the "queen" and her prime minister, and if the young lady had merited the appellation in the morning, when dressed in the rustic white muslin garments that suited her wild rambles, no one would hesitate to award it now.

Not that the little queen sparkled in gold, diamonds, and precious stones; her mother had never taught her the value of these, for Kate was a very child of nature. And now as the young lady came forward, with her snowy robe floating around her lithe and graceful form; her dark hair confined by a pretty wreath, while another encircled her full, rounded waist, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling from exercise and excitement, both Mr. and Mrs. Willard thought her the most beautiful creature they had ever seen.

Nor was the quiet, dignified Ellen overlooked, with her gentle manners and calm eyes; no

one could enact prime minister so well, at least no one in that group.

"That man looks as if he knew something," whispered Clifford as they wheeled about to lead the way back to the parsonage.

"Nothing ordinary about *them*," replied Charley.

"Let's see how he is received at court," whispered Haskill.

"Not like a courtier, of course," suggested Clifford; "for he that negotiates between God and man, as God's ambassador, should beware of lightness in his speech."

"True, he may not be light, but he may be agreeable, for Paul became all things to all men that he might win some. He is as good authority as Cowper," urged Haskill.

"The party is halting," said Charley.

"Clifford, you are master of ceremonies."

The group had rallied round the May-pole, and the carriage had drawn up to the door. George Clifford stepped forward and was introduced to the minister, and then, with well-affected

dignity, begged the honor of presenting him to her majesty, the "Queen of May."

Mr. Willard was not the man to be disconcerted by a school-girl farce; he had too much knowledge of the world for that; far less would he throw a damper on the spirits of the young people by any awkward restraint on their festivities.

Hastily removing his hat he advanced, and taking the little extended hand bowed till it met his lips, and then in a very pretty speech he expressed his pleasure in being able to visit her dominion, and his confidence in her protection while remaining in it. He then shook hands with the prime minister and the ladies, as each were presented to him. But when Mrs. Willard came to be presented to the queen the farce was broken. One glance at the smiling, tearful face of Maria, and the impulsive girl threw her arm round her neck, and imprinted a warm girlish kiss on her pale cheek. She then linked her arm in hers, led her in, and presented both her and Mr. Willard to her

mother and a few other matrons who had come to see that the minister's family was not distracted by the young people.

"Let me take you to your chamber, Mrs. Willard," said Kate.

"By no means, Miss Karlton; I must not separate the queen from her train."

"O, I am weary of so much homage," replied the merry girl. "See, I have given my scepter to baby, and mean to resign the crown and retire to private life. I had rather be waiting-maid than queen." So saying, she took up Mrs. Willard's reticule and led the way up stairs.

It was a pleasant party that gathered round the tables that evening at the parsonage. The young ladies served tea and coffee, and the young gentlemen distributed the eatables. There was pleasant conversation and innocent laughter, smiling faces and light hearts. The pastor and lady entered into the pleasantries of the occasion, and by *pleasing* gave evidence that they were *pleased*.

After supper Mr. Willard, seeing that the young men were fearful of longer intruding on the travelers, took his Bible and read a few select portions, after which Maria sang in her clear, sweet voice the following stanza :

“ Hence may all our actions flow ;
Love the proof that Christ we know ;
Mutual love the token be,
Lord, that we belong to thee :
Love, thine image, love impart ;
Stamp it now on every heart :
Only love to us be given ;
Lord, we ask no other heaven.”

Then followed an appropriate prayer, thanksgiving for kind friends, social pleasures, and the innumerable blessings that crowned their days, humble confessions for faults and follies, and a devout invocation for Divine favor.

After the young people had left, Mrs. Mayo, Mrs. Karlton, and a few other matrons, with their husbands, remained to put “things in order,” which they did in the easiest manner in the world ; while Emily, the faithful maid, would walk from room to room, with little Walter in

her arms, pleasantly begging the ladies not to trouble themselves, for she could do it all to-morrow.

At ten the pastor and his lady retired to their chamber, feeling that much of the first labor of getting acquainted had been accomplished that evening.

CHAPTER XXVI.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.—1 CORINTHIANS ii, 4.

Two days after was the Sabbath, and the little May party, many of whom were in the choir, exchanged glances as the minister announced his text: “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

The discourse that followed was appropriate and highly interesting. To make the subject plain, he spoke secularly of the duties of an ambassador to represent the power and dignity of his own sovereign, and to negotiate any important embassy to the court or people whither he was sent.

He then, by sublime imageries, drew a comparison between the dominion of the highest

potentate of earth and that of the King of kings and Lord of lords. He described the law of God, the revolt and rebellion of man, the anger of Jehovah, the great propitiation, the embassy to man, terms of reconciliation, and finally closed by warmly and earnestly entreating his hearers to be reconciled to God.

Altogether the sermon was a departure from his usual habit of preaching to a new people, and not at all what might be called an introductory sermon. Mr. Willard had come to that place where he did not have so anxiously to meditate beforehand what he should speak, (he came to it by deep experience and holy faith,) where God was to him mouth and wisdom which his adversaries could not gainsay or resist. Not that he had in any measure buried his native talents, which in all their brilliancy he had given to God; nor did he fail in giving to his intellect that food which was necessary to its growth and expansion; but he dwelt more in the inner sanctuary where Divine light illumined his intellect and quickened his

moral powers. It was there that he had learned to apply for his daily message to the people; and those people marveled exceedingly at the singular appropriateness of his sermons while as yet he was a stranger. As though the great Master did not know where in the moral field to place his faithful laborers, and what to set them about.

The people of ——port were what might be termed a community of Gospel-hardened sinners. There was in the place a respectable Church of Methodists, both in size and wealth, besides many sister Churches, and there had been for several years past an annual visitation of a few mercy drops; but either for want of discreet management on the part of the laborers, or of faith in the Church, or, what was more probable than either, from a determined resistance on the part of awakened sinners, but comparatively few had been brought into the Church.

Scores of sons and daughters of praying parents had grown up without an interest in the

Saviour, and there had come to be a sort of despondency respecting them.

Among those was Kate Karlton. She had been brought up within the light and warmth of the domestic altar, hundreds and perhaps thousands of prayers had been offered for her, fervent petitions and faith-fraught, coming from the hearts of her pious parents, and from the hearts of scores of the servants of God who had from time to time sojourned with the family, or pilgrims who could tarry but a night, but had left holy sacrifices smoking on the family altar. Notwithstanding, the parents had grown fearful and unbelieving, and seemed to think that their petitions were thrown aside, or spurned in the very presence of Him in whose name they were offered.

They did not know that for every hour of thoughtless gayety she had many of sad memories and restless disquiet.

The world called her gayety innocent; and well it might be termed thus, for Kate, though beautiful and engaging, had never aspired to the

worship of the gay followers of youth and beauty, had never wasted her time and health in midnight revelry, nor did she wish to do so. She would not aggrieve her parents so much would they permit it. The dear girl was simple in her tastes and habits, simple in her dress and amusements, and every one loved her.

Why then was she unhappy, and why did she suffer remorse when not even the Church could have forbidden her gayeties had she been one of its members?

I will tell you, gentle reader, that you may know from whence that reproachful voice in your own breast.

When our blessed Lord was about to leave his disciples and go again to his Father he promised unto them the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, which was to guide them into all truth; and it was that same Comforter that was to reprove the world of sin, because they believed not on Him.

There was the secret of Kitty Karlton's lonely hours, and of the tears that none but God wit-

nessed, and the resolutions made in the lone darkened chamber, and broken when life's busy dream had taken the place of eternal realities.

Alas, how many there are who will dream on and on till they awake at the final judgment!

Helen Mayo was another who stood on the very portals of the Church, neither receding nor advancing, a child of many prayers and much faith, and yet lingering between her love of the world and her love of religion.

Charley and Rosa Edwards were children of a pious widow, who had given them to God from their birth, and she fully believed that she should see her beloved boy a watchman on the walls of Zion.

William Haskill had been an object of prayerful solicitude ever since he had been taken, a little boy, to the Conference to be baptized by the presiding bishop, and somehow there had always seemed to be too much done for him; he needed a little wholesome neglect.

And last in our sketchings comes George Clifford, the son of the village lawyer, who, provided his son learned his lessons and gave promise of future usefulness, cared little what religion he favored or what (respectable) company he kept, and so the young gentleman was often found in Miss Karlton's train, and sang with her in church.

We have selected these individuals from the society at ——port, not from any peculiarity in their characters or stations in life, but as an illustration of the unconverted, with but few exceptions, to whom Mr. Willard had to preach. There were no new cases of moral disease for which he had to prescribe, nor was it a new Gospel that he proclaimed. It was just what they had heard from the beginning.

As the weeks rolled on the new preacher was pronounced interesting, and became very popular. True, he preached the same word which had so oft proved unprofitable, not being mixed with faith in them that heard. Would it profit now?

Thus asked many a faithless but praying Christian, little thinking that the precious ingredient which would insure profit was wanting in their own souls.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.—*HEBREWS vi, 19.*

MRS. WILLARD's journal contained the following record of affairs in ——port:

“Through the evolutions of our system we have found another pleasant field of labor.

“I entered the itinerancy with pleasing anticipations, which have been more than realized. I have learned to love it and to feel that I have no interests apart from it, and how have we been blessed! True it is that some of our blessings have been disguised, so that at first we thought them trials; but when the shadow had passed, how bright were the beamings from the Father of lights.

“I am learning to feel that every dispensation of Providence is a direct token from my loving Lord.

"In our Conference appointments I seem to hear a voice saying, 'Arise and pitch thy tent in the place whither I shall bring you; for I have gone before and sought you out a place, and will bear you thither as a man beareth his son.' I daily thank God for his guiding hand, and have not the slightest wish to mark my own path.

"Yesterday we were visited by a local preacher. He took little Walter on his knee, and in the course of conversation asked me if I had no anxiety respecting a provision for the child.

"I told him truly that I had none; I had experienced so much of the care and love of my heavenly Father that I could trust him entirely.

"'That is right,' said he; 'we ought to trust God, and yet I think the Church remiss in her duty. Have not you found it so, sister?'

"I replied that much as I loved the Church and her interests it was not her I trusted, but the great Head whose care was over all his creatures.

“Poor man! he was once a faithful watchman on the walls of Zion; but when God had given to him two little boys, he resigned his holy trust to lay up treasure for them.

“His own interests both for time and eternity he could leave with God; but the temporal interests of the babes he had to take in his own hands, and for that purpose has come down from his great work.

* * * * * *

“Katy Karlton has become as a sister to me; almost every day she comes to sit an hour with me. Little Walter runs to meet her, and often cries when she leaves. She is a lively, witty girl, with a great flow of spirits; but I have discovered an undercurrent of strong feeling, and if I mistake not she is deeply convicted by the Spirit of God.

“Walter and I pray together daily for a revival of religion here, and the conversion of the youth in this place. They have come by their delicate attentions to be very dear to us.

“Captain Hargrave has been here. O how

glad I was to see my dear old foster-father ! On Tuesday evening, while sitting at tea, a coach stopped at the door, and Emily announced that an old gentleman was getting out. Walter arose quickly and went to the door, and in a moment I heard his familiar tones.

“‘Don’t tell me that your lady’s away,’ said he, ‘for I have come a great way to see her.’ I hastened forward and was folded in his arms. And then he had to hug Walter for laughing so hard, and lastly poor *little* Walter was almost smothered with kisses, which seemed to disconcert him very much.

“It was with difficulty that we got him down to the tea-table, and then he often had to reach over and shake hands with Walter, or pat me on the shoulder.

“He stayed three days and became acquainted with many of our people. On Sabbath evening in the prayer-meeting he related his experience, and I never saw a greater interest than that evinced at the recital. The young people were deeply affected.

“I could not help weeping when the dear old man left me. He seemed to think it our last parting, and talked a great deal of that meeting where we should never part.

“‘You see,’ said he, ‘that I have seen the light, and know that there’s land just ahead ; I think I shall run into port very soon, darling, and that is why I came down to see you once more.’

“I asked the old gentleman, Why do you think so, when you are in such good health ?

“‘I have seen the little boy, dear, that God took from us when we loved him so well, just to break this old rough heart that it might go to Him for healing.

“‘But as I was saying, the child came to me one night in my dreams, and told me of a nice mansion already fitted for me, and somehow, my dear, you were mixed up in that dream, though may be ’twas nothing,’ and Captain Hargrave glanced uneasily at Walter, as though he feared to awaken his apprehension.

“Strange it was that my heart beat so wildly at that little allusion and that pitying look. It

was with difficulty that I controlled my emotions till the good old gentleman had left, in company with my husband, and then I flew to my room and burst into an agony of tears.

"O fond heart! and O foolish imagination! to think I should weep thus at the thought of dear Walter alone in the wide world, with only a poor motherless boy. Shall I record it? That strange foreshadowing; it has kept me from my pen for many a day, lest it should find a place here. But what matter; I am happy, very happy, and God will take care of *them*.

"Yesterday I walked in the graveyard with Kate. It is a beautiful spot, almost surrounded with fine old trees, through which come soft winds, swaying the branches and rustling the leaves, as though angels were whispering to each other and fluttering their wings. Half of the ground is an old graveyard made by the first settlers of the town; many of the stones had fallen down, and the inscriptions were effaced, but the other half is in good repair and neatly kept.

"There were costly monuments, with the most affectionate and pious inscriptions, which in my simplicity I supposed marked the place of the dead in Christ, or of the illustrious dead. But I was undeceived by the remarks of Kate, who gave me the history of many of those who slept there.

"One inscription told of loving friends, high honors, and great wealth, which were all cheerfully given for Christ. On inquiry I learned that the sleeper beneath that costly slab was once an inn-keeper, who had made hundreds of drunkards while living, and had died of delirium tremens.

"'His whole life,' said Kate, 'was one continuous cheat, and now in death he is deceiving all who may chance to look on that inscription.'

"'But that is not the end, dear Kate,' said I; 'he has gone to a just God, who has a faithful record of his deeds.'

"I turned away in sadness, and wandered to the lower side of the ground, where were hum-

bler graves. One particularly attracted my attention, and I went to it. Two weeping willows stood at each end, both drooping over the grave. The stone was low and plain, and I had to kneel and part the grass to read the inscription. It was: 'Annette, wife of Rev. Mr. B., of the —— Conference, aged 24.'

"There were some lines, but I could not read them, such were my blinding tears.

"Then came that strange foreshadowing which has haunted me ever since I came to this place, and I stepped back and with my eye measured the little spot beside it. Yes, there was just room enough for another narrow grave, with low stones and a weeping willow. I wondered if Mr. B. would not feel better in knowing that another itinerant wife lay beside that lone grave.

"I think I sobbed a little, for Kate came and stood by my side, and asked me if I knew that lady. I told her no, that it was affecting to see her lying alone.

"'Yes,' said Kate; 'I suppose he did not

feel able to carry her away to her friends. I remember how sad and sick he looked, and how he thanked us children for planting the willow and some flowers on the grave.'

"Poor man," said I; "is he living?"

"I don't know," replied my companion; "he was so unhappy that he could'nt stay in this Conference. I heard he had gone West."

"O how I wanted to tell her that if there should come to be another grave for an itinerant wife I wanted it there, and then it would be no matter about the stones or the willow, for it was very pretty as it was, and Annette's grave would be company for it; but O, if they would just remember the poor lone minister in his great grief, and take care of him—but tears came so fast I could not speak. After a while I became more composed, and asked Kate if the lady had died of consumption.

"Kate answered that she had long been feeble, and sunk away after the birth of a little babe.

"O how I wept! The dear girl came, and

putting her arm about me, begged I would go home, saying she ought not to have brought me to that sad place.

"I told her it was not sad to me, and I loved to think of it as a quiet resting-place to the weary. It was not for the dead that I wept, but for the living, for I had known the sorrows of bereavement.

"I am glad that I had strength of mind to tell her of the blessed hope I have of entering into a holy rest in the kingdom of my Father. While I talked with her my spirits grew light, and I told her of God's love to his creatures, and earnestly entreated that she would yield her heart to him; and she promised with many tears that she would seek religion.

"And now as I write I am very happy; there is sweet music in my heart. Not those overwhelming strains that sometimes fall on my ear, stirring the soul's depths, and almost crumbling poor human nature; I seem to float in an atmosphere of love, very near to the eternal city, and now and then I catch an angel's lay.

“Lord, I am thine, forever thine! Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate me from the love of God; and though the dear ones thou hast given me are closely interwoven with the tendrils of my heart, I know that I shall be made willing in the day of thy power.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.—JOB xii, 12.

ONE day Mr. Willard and wife were invited to dine at Brother Mayo's, to meet a party of friends, among whom were Father M. and wife, aged superannuates in the itinerary, with whose appearance they were particularly interested.

Their garments were perfectly neat and whole, though there were in the well-brushed suit of the old gentleman a score of darns, with now and then a little piece inserted, so tidily that not even a scoffer would have dared call it a *patch*. His wife wore a dark, cheap print, with a snowy 'kerchief of ancient material folded across her bosom, over which played the white ribbons of her plain muslin cap.

The old gentleman was bald, with only a few thin locks of gray about his temples and neck; but the lady had heavy folds of silvery hair

parted smoothly on her forehead. Her blue eyes were bright and beaming, while his were dark and piercing. On the countenance of each sat a quiet, benevolent smile, such as aged parents might have in company of their dutiful children.

Brother Alden was there, the local preacher who had sold his Gospel commission for "stock in trade." His lady towered like a queen, with a purple turban above her dark plaited hair. She wore an ample robe of blue satin, which, with her two boys, made the room seem altogether too small.

The conversation turned upon the success of the Gospel, compared with what it was in other days, and there was much that was interesting in the discussion. Brother Alden thought that the system was behind the times; it should be changed to keep pace with the "march of mind." People used to be governed by their affections; their passions even. Those were the avenues through which public speakers found access to their hearts. Times had changed; it was now an age of intellect. Men

had become reasoners, hence we needed an educated ministry; those who promulgated the Gospel should be intelligent, educated, and refined, else their preaching would be vain, and the world continue in their sins.

Mr. Willard assented. Less than that he could not do, and he felt a delicacy in expressing an opinion before that aged veteran, whose experience had furnished so much proof of the power of the Gospel in its simplicity.

Brother Mayo courteously insisted the fault was not in the ministry, but in the Church; such was her unbelief that the Saviour himself could hardly do mighty works among them.

Grandmother M. said that we needed more faith and Holy Ghost, both in the ministry and among the laity.

The brethren gave a respectful assent, while Mrs. Alden arched her fine neck and smiled at the primitive simplicity of the old lady.

Meanwhile Father M. was attentively surveying the different speakers. On Brother Alden he looked with a kind of pitying severity; on

the host and Brother Willard it softened. The one was an old, tried friend, and the other had given proof of his respectful consideration for age and experience. Finally his eye came back and rested quietly on his aged companion, where it had rested in love and confidence for the last fifty years.

At length he spoke. "Brethren," said he, "I will tell you a story, if you please."

The brightened, attentive glances showed how much they were pleased.

"We have a daughter," commenced the old gentleman, and his eye went back to its old resting-place; "she is our youngest, and a beautiful child she was. At the age of nineteen we gave her in marriage to the lover of her childhood, and a happy man he was when he had borne her to his green home among the mountains. And there they lived many years, and it was the birth-place of numerous sons and daughters, and not in all the land were there finer children than those. Their fields supplied them bread and vegetables; from their

flocks and herds they obtained milk and meats; the busy bee brought them honey, and their tall shade-trees poured them out other sweets. The pure mountain air imparted health and vigor, the sons grew strong and active and the daughters fair and blooming, for there was nothing to hurt or destroy in that mountain home.

"But after a time the children went forth to visit the daughters of the land, and they brought back to that quiet home a spirit of unrest. They compared their dwelling with the mansions of the proud and great of this world, and found that it was humble. They ate at the board of the rich and luxurious, and lost their appetite for their own simple fare. At last the family grew clamorous for the advantages of city life, and the old homestead was exchanged for a residence in town, where they still reside.

"We have visited them in their new home, and marked the effect of change from their simple rural habits. The mother is feeble and languid, the father is almost a stranger in his

own dwelling. We sat at their luxurious board, and saw how the rich dainties were slighted by those children of sickly, fastidious appetites. I saw the little ones receiving the rich cakes from silver baskets, just to pick at the fruit and frosting, while that which might afford nourishment was laid aside; and O how I longed to take them back to their own mountain home!"

The old gentleman paused and wiped a tear from his withered cheek, while another stood on that of his companion, as she said: "You have given them the story, father, now for the moral."

"O yes, the moral," replied the old gentleman. "It is very simple, and easily understood. When I see our Church disdaining the simple bread of life, and essaying to feed her starving children on its gildings and adornings, I am prepared for the cry, 'My leanness, O my leanness!' What! the Gospel refined so as to suit the taste of the fastidious, and those of squeamish sensibilities; the sword of truth blunted so as to tickle men's fancies rather

than pierce their hearts; God's high commission qualified by man's invention, and the Gospel armor become the trappings of the world!

"Alas for the Church when these things are brought about! Well may it be said, 'Her glory is departed, and *Ichabod* is an appropriate motto for her banners.'

"Come, come, father," said the old lady affectionately, "we must not croak. God will take care of his Church."

"So he will, Hannah," replied Father M.; "I do not doubt it; but while I live I must raise my voice against guilty compromise with the spirit of the world, or faith-destroying innovations."

"And long may that voice be heard," replied Mr. Willard, in a filial, deferential tone. Just then the quiet, graceful Ellen glided in, and laying her hand on her father's shoulder whispered that dinner was ready, and the party adjourned to the dining-room.

In the afternoon Mrs. Willard went up stairs to get little Walter asleep. Scarcely had the

little boy dropped off to dream-land before Maria heard a light tap at the door, and in came Mother M.

"I wanted to see you, dear," said the old lady as Maria seated herself upon a low stool and turned the rocking chair round to her. "You are such a frail looking creature that I wanted to inquire about your health."

Maria told her all that she knew, and the good old lady gave her much kind, motherly advice. "You must not be anxious about anything, dear; confide trustingly in God.

"The trouble with our preachers' wives is that they assume too many cares and responsibilities; they are not willing to live like pilgrims and strangers. Such are their old domestic habits that wherever they are planted for a short season they want to spread about and take root; hence it is difficult to pull them up, and set them out in other parts of the Gospel field."

"That is just what husband and I have talked of," replied Maria; "that it was better to have only what we needed year by year, and we are

beginning to see the benefit of such an economy. We thought the idea original with us."

"Just the same, dear sister, if it came from your own experience, and I wish it would occur to all our itinerant wives. Poor Sister S. has almost worn herself into her grave because the nice outfit her father gave her has been injured by her frequent removals. Two or three heavy trunks of wearing apparel, linen, etc., have to be moved every year, while a corresponding quantity of heavy furniture is injured and worn by the same means. She says that none should enter the itinerancy but single men, and they should have their 'raiment of camel's hair, and their meat locusts and wild honey.' She is a sad clog to her husband, and it will be a blessing to the Conference and to herself when her poor, quivering nerves are at rest."

"But what has been your experience, Sister M.?" asked Maria; "there must be some secret in your being so cheerful and healthy."

"No secret, dear; I'll tell you how I commenced my wandering life. I was a farmer's

daughter, brought up in primitive style in an old-fashioned Methodist family. I was accustomed to their religion and usages, and at fifteen a happy convert to their faith. We had flocks and herds in abundance, and my sister and myself spent our leisure hours in manufacturing clothes for our own future use, so that when I had reached the age of nineteen, and she that of twenty-one, our greatest care was where we should bestow our goods. But after a time a young farmer took her with her portion, and then I had leisure to think of a young 'strippling,' as the old folks called him, through whose influence half the town had become Christians.

"After many months of counting the cost, I went over and told Abigail that I should marry Brother M., and I wanted her to come and hear me tell our parents."

"'Why, Hannah,' said she, 'you are not going to marry that poor minister, with only a valise to live in.' (Nabby was a worldly-minded child, and had not yet come to love the Lord.)

"I told her that I was; for I thought he

needed a woman to keep that valise in order ; and it was not good for man to be alone, even in a valise.

“And then the covetous darling began to appropriate my piles of blankets, beds, and quilts. ‘You will want but few, sister,’ said she, ‘and had better give them to Tom’s wife and me.’

“I told her that neither she nor Tom’s wife should have one of them, for they had enough already to keep them out of heaven. I would lend mine to the Lord, for maybe I might want them some day. And so I did, and there were scores of poor people that blessed me as though I didn’t expect pay. And I married the ‘stripling,’ and since then we have sent three sons and two daughters into the itinerant field.”

“And you have never wanted ?” asked Maria.

“Certainly, dear, we have wanted ; but we always had a place to carry our wants, and they were always supplied ; we knew they would be, and that has kept us from getting a single thing except for immediate necessities.

“We have always had a morsel for a wayfaring brother, and a spare couch whereon he could rest his weary limbs.”

Just then Sister Mayo came in, saying that Father M. thought he must be going, and she had put a few articles into a basket for them. Some lamb, eggs, a ball of butter, and a bit of cheese. Was there nothing else they would like?

Nothing except she would permit her to knit a little for her, as her fingers tired of idleness. Of course she would; a skein of yarn was brought from a trunk, and the old lady was employed to knit a nice pair of socks for Father M., or for any other servant of God who might need them.

“What dear old people these are,” said Maria, after she had returned home. “I have had a great lesson to-day.”

“And so have I, my dear,” replied Mr. Willard. “I wouldn’t object to such dinner parties every week.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.—ISAIAH lx, 1, 4.

ONE evening Kate Carlton called at the parsonage to see Mrs. Willard. The lady was sitting in the chamber with her husband, and sent word for her to come up. Little Walter must needs go to fetch her, and soon she came in leading the child by the hand.

“I am glad to see you, Katy,” said Mrs. Willard; “how you have stayed away; have you been well?” asked she as she placed a kiss on her rosy cheek.

“Yes, quite well,” answered Kate; “and yet I have had reasons for staying away.”

“What were they, dear Katy?” asked the lady with earnestness, for she saw that there was a strange moisture in that bright eye, and her voice was unusually low.

"Now I am afraid you want to banish me," said Mr. Willard playfully.

"Indeed, no, sir," said Kate; "for I think you will be glad to know that I am coming to feel happy."

"I knew it, sister," replied Mrs. Willard, throwing her arms round her neck and again kissing her.

"Sit down, Miss Kate, and tell us all about it," said Mr. Willard encouragingly.

Kate obeyed, relating with great artlessness and many tears that for many days she had been very sad, and even distressed with a sense that she was a stranger to God, and destitute of his saving love. The last night she had spent in prayer, and just as the day dawned a sweet peace had fallen on her spirit; and while the happy girl related the great things the Lord had done for her, her countenance shone with inward light. Both Mr. and Mrs. Willard were greatly moved as she told them how deeply her heart had been impressed from their first coming; how that

first prayer at the parsonage, and that song, had deepened and strengthened resolutions that she had often made to seek the Saviour.

“Have you told your parents?” asked Mr. Willard.

“Not yet; I was waiting to see if this happy feeling would not pass away; but I am now assured it is from God;” and Katy clasped her hands and gazed upward in rapture.

When Kate returned Mr. Willard walked over with her, and sat with the family at the offering of the evening sacrifice. Mr. Karlton read a portion of Holy Writ, and then asked his pastor to lead in prayer.

“I think,” said Mr. Willard, “that your daughter has something to communicate;” and he looked encouragingly to the young lady who was trembling with emotion.

Kate arose, and throwing herself into her father’s arms confessed her life-long disregard of the precepts he had taught her, and her firm resolve to devote her remaining days to the service of God.

O what holy sacrifices went up that evening from the old family altar! What tears and sighs of heart-felt joy were blended therewith! what confessions from hearts that had well nigh fainted from hope deferred!

Ah! it was for this that the family altar had been kept in repair, and smoking with incense for twenty years; for this that the morning and evening sacrifice had been laid thereon. Was the answer enough? the reward complete? Say, O thou praying one, was it not glorious?

Not long after the conversion of Miss Karlton, Mr. Willard announced from the pulpit that there would be a camp-meeting in the grove not far distant, and he hoped there would be such a general attendance that it would be necessary to pitch at least two tents from that place. He spoke of the origin of camp-meetings, and their former success in the conversion of souls. He told them that it had been the custom in all stages of Christianity for people to go apart to worship; Christ and his disciples

went into high mountains, and it was there that he was transfigured before them. "Man," he said, "was a creature of circumstance, and he needed rest, change, and recreation to invigorate his physical system. Even the soul wanted its holy days and its gala attire, wherein it could break its fetters, and shake off the dust that had grown upon it in its sympathetic ploddings after the world, and soar and revel in its own native element." The pastor concluded by giving a short history of his own conversion at camp-meeting.

Altogether the remarks were very interesting and well-timed, and awakened a great interest in the minds of the people for that Church festival.

Since the conversion of Kate Karlton, the young people with whom she was accustomed to associate had somewhat deserted her. Not that they loved her less, but there had come to be a barrier between them that as yet she had not been able to remove. As for Ellen Mayo, she mourned as though her beloved friend

were dead, though, truth to tell, it was more for herself than for Kate that she wept.

Mr. and Mrs. Willard thought that they discovered the signs of the times. For many weeks they had been praying for a shower of Divine grace, and they felt that the conversion of one precious soul was a sort of first-fruit of a glorious harvest. She became more than that, even an efficient laborer in the work; for when Katy glided around among the gay circle of whom she had once been the center and light, and urged them to go to the camp-meeting, there was not one who could refuse.

We have not time to tell of that week's campaign, wherein Israel's army encamped against the hosts of the enemy; or of the pitched battles that ensued, in which the whole Gospel artillery was brought to bear against them, and many were slain thereby. Suffice it to say that among the trophies won there were thirty souls from the —port station, among whom were all of the little group introduced to the pastor on that memorable May-day.

Yes, there was Ellen Mayo, Charles and Rosa Edwards, William Haskill, with a score of others rejoicing in God.

To George Clifford the struggle was long and doubtful; the youth knew that not to his worldly parents would the tidings of his conversion be joyful ones, and for a time he shrank from confessing Christ. But at last in a frank and manly style he acknowledged his new-found treasure, and besought them to investigate those things, and see if they were not true, and worthy of the attention of mortals.

"Why, George," said the father, "what new folly are you practicing now?"

"No folly, sir," replied George, in a respectful tone; "it is the first wisdom of my life, and believe me, sir, the first happiness."

The sincerity and earnestness of the young man won upon his father, who did not oppose his course, and very soon the mother became partaker of like precious faith, and was baptized at the same altar with her son.

And not only were there many new-born

souls, but wanderers were reclaimed and the Church invigorated, and holiness to the Lord became her motto. It was while Mr. Willard was unusually interested on the subject of entire consecration that he had a dream, the interpretation of which was hidden from him. He thought that his whole moral man stood out before him, and he could behold it with his natural eyes. He saw that it was beautiful, even like its Divine image, except here and there a slight blemish or deformity, which became more visible the longer he gazed upon it. He thought that he wept and prayed to be renewed in the Divine likeness whole and entire, and a voice came to him saying, "Canst thou bear the fiery ordeal?"

And he answered, "Yea, Lord, for thy sake and the Gospel's I can bear all things."

Then said the voice unto him, "O son of man, I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant."

CHAPTER XXX.

But he knoweth the way that I take : when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.—JOB xxiii, 10.

ANOTHER year had come to the inhabitants of our earth. It came in quiet and stealthily, even while the rosy morn was sleeping in the chambers of the east, and the sable queen of night was spreading her mantle over the couch, as though old time would surprise the world with its advent.

And yet there were those who watched its approach. Some there were around the couch of the dying, and some there were “ who watched to weep.”

There were those who spent the night in mirth and revelry, and sacrifices to Bacchus, and there were a few who spent it in watching unto prayer. Of the latter was Walter Willard, our itinerant servant of God, and pastor of the Church at ——port.

With a few of his ministering brethren, and as many of the Church as would join them, he had held a watch-meeting. Together they had preached, prayed, and sung, and together they had knelt in solemn, silent prayer at the awful hour when time in its mystic evolutions had rolled the ancient year into the eternal past; bringing from the eternal future an infant year to take his place and rule the coming seasons.

The watch-meeting had passed, and the little group had retired to their respective homes and to their couches to refresh their bodies with sleep, even as their spirits had been refreshed by devotion, that together they might be fitted for the new duties which a new day and a new year would develop.

Not so their pastor. No sleep awaits his weary eyelids on this night. He must *think, think*. The little fire that he kindled on coming home has burned to ashes, and the dim candle has burned low in its socket, and finally gone out. No matter; the pale moon is pour-

ing a flood of light upon the floor, and the watcher loves its beams.

He is thinking of that city that needeth not the light of the sun or of the moon, for the Lord God is the light thereof, and there were sweet fields, and beautiful dwellings, and a happy throng awaiting him there.

He thinks of the apostles, and the prophets, and the martyrs, and all of the dead that died in the Lord; and while he thinks his spirit-eyes are unsealed, and they pass before his mental vision. Yes, there they are, the innumerable multitude, those that have come up out of great tribulation, he knows them by their white and glistening robes. Each holy saint wears the emblem of his sufferings here. How they pass before the great white throne, each in his own order; and bowing, chant the lay of heaven and earth: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

A quiet, gentle spirit is gliding to and fro, as though on missions of love from one ransomed

soul to another, and the watcher knows by the olive branch he bears that it is good, peaceful Uncle Brown. Near him follows another form, around which cluster six little ones, and the watcher whispers "Mother, O my mother!"

But farther on, and very near the Lamb, stands one for whom he hath waited and watched for many long, lone nights.

Such was her enduring, undying love, even to the last moment when the spirit had quietly slipped away, leaving its precious remains in his arms, that the mourning watcher fully believed that she must come back to smile on him once more.

But now as he sees her in that bright inner circle, with the golden lyre in her hand, and thinks what seraphic strains must flow from a soul that made so much melody here, he is content to suffer on in sorrow and in loneliness, all the days of his life, that they may be reunited in that happy place.

O what a night was that to the good man! how near did he come to the eternal city.

Who shall say that it was not so? For the soul has not far to travel to its heaven. It is only the awakening of new powers. And who shall say that some of those angels who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation did not hover round that lone watcher? Certain it was that new manifestations, such as he had never before felt, burst upon him, and new strength was given unto him.

It was seldom after that night that Walter Willard visited the narrow grave (beside that of Annette) where slept his beloved wife, with a tiny babe on her bosom. And never after did he sit in his lone room waiting for her to come and smile on him. But he went forth into the work of God with renewed vigilance and untiring love.

How did the Church of which he was pastor cling to the good man and his motherless boy; and how did they mourn the sudden death of the sweet lady who had become so dear to them. Poor Kate Karlton almost wept her life away, and as the spring came on spent much of

her time at the grave of Mrs. Willard; and though she loved the Saviour she marveled at the calm submission of the widowed husband.

As the summer advanced the flowers bloomed on the grave of Maria Willard and on that of Annette, and the willows waved and beckoned in the night-breeze; but Walter thought oftener of fair flowers blooming in paradise, and gentle spirits beckoning him there, and light from the celestial city shed its radiance on that pale brow as he walked softly before his God.

O son of man, thou hast passed under the rod, and hast come into the bond of the covenant!

CHAPTER XXXI.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, . . . and shall say, I am no prophet, I am a husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle.—ZECHARIAH. xiii, 4, 5.

JUST before the close of the Conference year 184—, there appeared on a dark, drizzly evening at the door of Mr. Willard a traveler, wet, weary, and much bespattered with mud.

Emily Morris, who was still in the service of the family as housekeeper and nurse to little Walter, hastened to call Mr. Willard, who on entering the room recognized the new comer as Brother Sangers, a member of the Conference, who had been ordained the year before and appointed to the S— circuit.

Mr. Willard hastened to replenish the fire, and Emily to prepare supper.

Suddenly recollecting himself, the host started to the door to look after the horse of the traveler.

“Don’t trouble yourself,” said Brother Sangers; “that is well cared for,” and he pointed to a staff that stood in the corner of the room, guarding a small bundle.

“Why, have you come on foot?” asked Mr. Willard in surprise.

“Just so, brother,” was the meek answer.

Then followed interrogation of the reasons.

“The roads are rough, and my people were not willing to trust their horses on a journey at this season,” was the answer.

“Why didn’t you come on in the stage?” asked Mr. Willard.

“My purse was low,” was the laconic reply.

“My dear brother,” said the host with an air of uncommon interest, “for what kind of a people have you labored?”

“For a very good people, but small and poor. I don’t complain of them; they received but little from me, and the laborer is only worthy of his hire;” and Brother Sangers smiled a sad, subdued smile.

“Come, come, brother,” said Mr. Willard, “I

see you are weary and dispirited; I am glad that you are in season to rest and recruit yourself before proceeding on your journey. You will not receive the welcome that used to await my guests, but we will make you as comfortable as we can."

Brother Sangers stayed with Mr. Willard till they departed together for Conference, and it was during that visit and journey that he imparted his intention of locating, in order, he said, to prepare for the ministry. It was evident that he was under severe trials, and it was in order to understand those trials and motives that Mr. Willard led him on to impart his history, which, being a truthful and connected narrative, we subjoin, to illustrate the itinerant without the advantages of education or a knowledge of the world.

To make the history more interesting we will give it just as it was related by the narrator, only pledging our veracity for its truthfulness.

"I am," said Brother Sangers, "a country plow-boy. My father owned a large farm in

the town of —, in the State of —. It was bounded east, west, north, and south by a high stone wall, and that 'wall' was expected to bound our interests, hopes, and ambitions for this life. True, we had gates, bars, and such outlets, by and through which we held that intercourse with the outer world that was deemed necessary to the happiness and well-being of our little inner world.

"My father was a pious man. Through his instructions we were taught the first rudiments of theology. Twice in each day he offered prayer, always standing beside the kitchen window, till I came to regard that spot as a holy place. At meals he pronounced grace, always in the same words, as were also his daily prayers. I have no doubt that those sacrifices were acceptable in the sight of God. That they were useful I am sure, from the fact that early in life I awoke to a strange longing to know more of God, and, above all, to feel that he was my friend.

"I think I was about ten years of age when

I came to the resolution that I would pray for myself. I had long felt it my duty, but the idea seemed presumptuous. But on that day I was sent into the field alone to do some light task, while my father and brothers were engaged in other employment, and while there I was overwhelmed with a sense of my lost condition as a sinner.

“Looking carefully about me to be sure that there were no observers, I bowed my little knees to the dust in which I was toiling, and clasping my hands, prayed God to be merciful to my soul. Then I arose and labored so diligently that at evening my father commended my faithfulness.

“Time rolled on, bringing a weight of cares and responsibilities, for my father was strict in enforcing the ‘primeval law.’ But though my hands were ever occupied with the muck-rake, my spirit could not be thus fettered; now and then it cast a lingering glance upward and beheld the celestial crown proffered for its acceptance; but how could a poor little

ignorant, dirty boy reach that crown, or how could he ever become fit to wear it?

“At the age of fifteen there came to our neighborhood a wandering apostle of the despised Nazarene, and after a few days’ sojourn appointed a series of meetings. They were to be held in the old school-house, where was doled out our meager pittance of intellectual food, which, like the hard crust given to the beggar, only served to whet our appetites and make our mental hunger the more keen.

“But neither mental nor physical hungerings were anything compared with my intense longing for some indefinite spiritual good. With what joy I accepted a stint from my father, for I knew that by an extra outlay of strength I could accomplish my task in time to attend the meeting. In due time I was washed, brushed, and on my way to the house of prayer. In that meeting several rose for prayer, and I among the rest. But I was wanting in faith and decision; and while others experienced justification, I was left to cavilings and doubt.

"At last I came to the conclusion that the work of grace was one of gradual progress, and it must be a long time before I could gain an evidence of my acceptance with God; so I commenced a self-denying, prayerful life, resolving that I would be a Christian outwardly whatever was the state of my heart, and for five years I searched the Scriptures, and prayed twice a day in secret.

"During that time I was subject to a great trial, and one that preyed continually on my spirits.

"When I was ten years of age there came to our home and hearts two twin babes, a brother and sister, with whom we were all much pleased. I loved the sweet children, and watched the development of reason in their infant minds. What made them peculiarly interesting was that very early there was something strange in their appearance that for a long time we could not make out. Healthy and active, they soon learned to smile at my approach, and grieve when I left them; and

yet we were long in discovering that only by the sense of hearing and touch they knew of my presence. The dear babes were blind! and O how sad I was to know that a dark vail rested on those mild, pleasant orbs, and my little brother and sister were to grope through life shut up in perpetual night! None of my prayers or pious resolutions could reconcile me to the thought.

“The children grew to childhood, and the little boy would follow me to the field, and by the sense of touch learn the formation of our implements of farming and their use, and by aid of my instruction commenced to labor. His first trial was in hoeing, and his mode of operation was to get down and with his hands feel out the form of the hill; then he would dig a while, and at last finish the operation with his hands.

“In this way he learned many kinds of work, and, strange to tell, came to be counted as a laborer. This was a grief to me, and I regretted having ever taught him anything, for I

could not bear to see him groping by my side.

“After a time I learned that people had been cured of blindness by surgical operation, and I urged my father to have a trial on our poor blind ones; but with his habitual caution he refused. He feared it would cause suffering without success; perhaps they would lose their eyes or even their lives in the operation.

“It was then that I resolved to make an effort myself. I had on hand a little purse, the product of my potato patch, for we were permitted to have that little income to furnish Sunday shoes and other luxuries, and that money I meant to devote to that purpose. With this view I enlisted my mother and the poor blind ones to consent to an examination, hoping that if they were pronounced hopeful cases my father would consent to the operation.

“Accordingly I started one morning to give the children a ride, drove to the city, and had the happiness of hearing that the film could be

removed from their eyes, and they partially if not completely cured.

"Meantime our mother had managed to remove the prejudices and fears of our father, so that when we returned he had become quite acquiescent in our plans.

"After a few days of preparation two physicians came with their instruments of torture, and one after another submitted to most agonizing operations. The assistant surgeon was so agitated that the instrument was put into my hands. I don't know how I did it, but I stood for several minutes holding the eye-ball of my poor sister with a hand paralyzed by determination to a perfect stillness.

"But why dwell on those awful moments; thank God they are passed, and those dear ones now enjoy God's blessed sunlight, and the brighter beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

"After that event I was content to labor-on with the family for a competency, and I strove to lay up for myself a foundation of good works. I read, and prayed, and labored to

make myself a Christian. All in vain. Our worldly efforts were successful; the family became independent; debts were paid off, improvements made, and now and then a little money laid aside for a rainy day; but not one step did I advance in the divine life. Even the old debt of transgression remained, and though I had striven for many years to offset it by prayer and good works, or by some means to abate its awful magnitude, yet there it stood beneath the flashings of Mount Sinai."

CHAPTER XXXII.

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.—MATTHEW x, 37.

“WHEN I was about twenty years of age I persuaded my father to let me attend the village high school. My thirst for knowledge was very great, and yet I never lost sight of the greater object of my life. I thought that by being wiser I could the sooner come to that state of goodness for which I panted.

“Many an hour have I sat in my room, urging on my intellect to its utmost capacity, while the merry shouts of my companions came floating on the evening air. My boyish pulse would bound with eagerness to join them; but no, those golden moments were all too precious to waste in play. My schoolfellows had days and weeks to each of them, and I, the poor plowboy, had as much to do as they. I supposed

them far in advance of me, and so they were in exterior, for in my diffidence and untrained manners I made but a poor appearance.

“Nothing ever gave me so much encouragement as when, after a few weeks, one of those bold, handsome boys came to me for assistance in his exercises. Studious at home and diligent there, I had in some branches outstripped them, and my heart fairly bounded with hope and happiness. There was one circumstance, however, that gave me pain ; I was misapprehended ; it was reported that I was a Christian, and some of the pious called me ‘brother.’ I began to feel that I was acting the part of a hypocrite, and I felt the deepest self-abasement. Here was a dilemma ; to go back and join affinity with the thoughtless and undevotional was not to be thought of ; to act a part was worse ; this, then, was a new motive why I should have that change for which my soul so much longed.

“One day, while attending religious service with the Congregationalists, I was startled by

the announcement of the preacher that he would receive in his study on Wednesday any persons who were anxious on the subject of religion and would like to converse; and on that day I walked three miles to avail myself of the privilege.

"When there I opened my mind freely, received Christian counsel, and bowed with the good man in prayer; but owing to a want of faith my spirit was not loosed. It was about that time that I began in my feelings to draw rapidly near to that period which was an epoch in my life, a starting-point toward that goal that is yet in prospect. I had fairly come to the conclusion that I never should have mercy in the way I sought, and only by confession should I obtain salvation. Accordingly I availed myself of the privileges of another protracted meeting, and publicly professed my convictions and resolutions, and humbly begged an interest in the prayers of God's people. The struggle of soul was now upon me, every fetter but unbelief was broken, and that was a com-

plete incrustation over all my moral powers. It obscured my vision, paralyzed my soul, and almost extinguished the light of reason.

“But in the midst of my internal struggles there was a gentle touch and a gentle voice, and my bonds were loosed. I was free, *free*, and earth nor hell had power to fetter my glad spirit.”

Brother Sangers paused, and Mr. Willard asked how long after his conversion before he felt that he must preach the Gospel.

“Not long; while I was glorying in the cross of Christ there came to my heart the conviction that I should have to bear its standard before lost men. It did not seem so much like a commission as a foreshadowing of that commission. When I strove to shake it off, my mind was in doubt of its justification. When I permitted it to remain, and mature under God’s providence, I was happy. From a sense of duty I united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, though I loved all Christians, and never stumbled at creeds or platforms.

“At length my conviction of duty became so strong that I opened my mind to my mother. She regarded it as a vain ambition, and warned me against its indulgence.

“This was a sore trial, and, added to my own misgivings, almost drove me to distraction. My mental agony bore down my physical health, appetite failed, and my flesh wasted as if under the power of disease.

“One evening, after the family had retired, I left the house and returned to the wood, resolved to settle the question in my own mind or never return. In that struggle I can truly say ‘the pains of hell got hold of me.’ I tried to pray, but could find no words; then I recalled the Lord’s prayer, but at the words ‘thy will be done,’ a strange suffocating sensation came over me. I gasped, struggled, and sweat broke from every pore; but at last the Spirit helped my infirmities, and I cried with a loud voice, ‘Thy will be done,’ and instantly a sweet peace fell on my soul. And then came the assurance that I should not be pressed at

once into the work, but should have time to add to my little stock of knowledge and make some preparation.

"But first I must get my parents' consent to preach, for I could not leave without their blessing. My father very conscientiously bade me do what I considered duty, but my mother was not to be moved. She could not consent to my being a Methodist itinerant; to her mind it was equivalent to being a strolling vagabond.

"At last I told her that God had called me to preach the Gospel, the 'wo' was upon me, and I waited her permission. With this remark I left the room, and retired to my chamber. Scarcely had I closed the door before I heard her voice at the foot of the stairs, calling, 'Leonard, you may do what you think right!' Dear old lady, she was sobbing so as to be hardly able to articulate, and I knew how much the sacrifice cost her. I thank God that she has come to a perfect reconciliation to God's will in that matter.

"I was not quite twenty-one, and would as

soon have thought of selling my birthright for a mess of pottage as asking my father to give me the few remaining months of my minority. But I determined as soon as that expired to attend school, and for that purpose I hoarded every cent I could honestly obtain with almost miserly care.

“At length the long-looked-for day arrived. The last harvest of my boyhood had been all garnered, and as I threw off the last sheaf my ‘harvest-home’ song was, ‘manhood and liberty.’

“I did not stop to think of the cold, wide world beyond the stone wall, but thrust my wardrobe, consisting of an ample store of strong home-made garments, into a trunk, which, with its contents, was provided by my mother, shook the parting hand, and like Abraham went out not knowing whither I went.

“My father had refunded the money I spent on the blind children, so I felt that I could attend school at least one quarter, and after a day’s ride I found myself in R., at one of

our institutions of learning. I studied and made considerable advance in the first principles of an education, and I was very happy. Associated with religious young people, all of whom were very kind to me, the weeks galloped by, and at last brought me to the end, or rather the bottom of my purse. When I had paid my bills, and got my trunk aboard the stage, I had just fifty cents. But I had strong, active limbs, and a light heart, filled with love to God, and I cut me a stout stick and started on foot for my father's house. The roads were rough, and at night when I stopped my feet were sorely blistered. I had walked thirty miles, and twenty more lay between me and home. The people with whom I tarried did not charge for my entertainment, and early in the morning I was on my way again.

"I limped every step, and to my further annoyance the coachman from my native town overtook me and offered to take me home for fifty cents, just my whole capital, and that I had devoted to the itinerant who for the first

time had been sent to labor on the Sabbath in our town; so I thanked the driver, and pursued my own crippled march.

“Never did the old homestead look so beautiful as when from the distant hills I had a view of it, and never was wanderer greeted with more love than I was.

“That winter I worked for my board with my father, and attended the winter school. In the spring I bargained for a lot of land, worked two months toward its pay, and then, shouldering my pack of provisions, went into the wilderness and commenced making a farm.”

“But did you not intend to preach?”

“Certainly I did, but I was too young and inexperienced, and wanted preparation. I lodged in an old camp; that was my home, and there I erected a family altar, where I used to pray vocally every day.”

“Were you alone?” asked Mr. Willard.

“Entirely; but after a time a weasel became my companion. Every morning when I awoke it would crouch in the corner of my camp, and

I learned to look for the little creature and love it. Perhaps God sent her to guard my simple stores, which consisted of hard bread and pork.

“The next year I built a neat log-cabin, and brought to it a gentle, affectionate wife, after which I saw my weasel no more.

“Soon after this I procured an exhorter’s license, and used after my week’s labor was over to go about in obscure settlements and call sinners to repentance. Souls were converted, and my determination grew stronger to devote myself to the work. For this purpose I studied my Bible and school-books, which was all the library I had, and I prayed a great deal.

“It was that summer that I felt impressed to go to my native village and preach Jesus, and I sent an appointment. When the time arrived I went with a trembling heart. As I expected the house was filled, and I had great liberty. O how was I strengthened in taking that cross!

“Soon after that I received a license to preach, and for four years I did preach on the Sabbath in the vicinity of my home, laboring

every other day on our little farm. But my heart began to go out after lost souls, and I felt that I must give my whole time to God's service. The Church too began to call, saying, What dost thou here, thou servant of God? arise, and go into the moral field, for there is need of thee there.

"Then came the temptations of Satan. I had just got things to my mind. Thirty acres of the forest had disappeared before my single ax, and grain and grass were waving in the summer winds. I had built a nice barn, and dug a well, and planted a nursery of choice fruits. We had a thriving stock of animals and fowls, among whom my wife had many pets, besides two little children, who were the music of our cottage. There was not a spot of land, or tree, or animal but what was dear from recollections of mutual trial and mutual hope.

"I shall never forget how Mary's rosy cheek blanched when I told her that I had promised to sell everything, and was going with my family to join the band of itinerants.

She was prepared for my preaching, but I think she had a lingering hope to be able to keep that green home to bring up her children in and welcome me to just as she had done.

"I told her that we should have to submit to toil and privation, but we were young and strong, and accustomed to it, and we ought to be willing to do as much for Christ as we had done for ourselves.

"'Tis not that I fear, Leonard,' said she, her eyes filling with tears; 'but we are neither of us polished or refined; how shall we appear in such a station? Just see your hands, and think how they will look gesticulating in the pulpit; but not half as bad as I shall appear trying to enact the minister's wife;' and she begged me to let her stay and feed her chickens and take care of the farm. Poor Mary! she has refined and sensitive feelings, and even now is tremblingly alive to her unfitness for her station."

"And is that the reason why you purpose to locate?"

“Partly that; and then I see that her pecuniary embarrassments wear on her spirits; she is not the rosy, laughing girl that she was, and I can’t bear to see her thoughtful, anxious countenance.”

“Have you been successful as a laborer?” asked Mr. Willard.

“O yes,” replied Brother Sangers; “God has used this poor instrument in the conversion of many souls.”

“And your health is good?”

“Very; I am seldom sick,” replied Brother Sangers.

“Then you must not leave the itinerancy, for don’t you see, my brother, that our laborers are falling on the battle-field? They are becoming few, while the harvest is great.”

“Yes, brother, but I started far behind the times, and cannot overtake them; and the world is growing fastidious, and want Brother Willard’s preaching.”

“Which it cannot have but a short time, even if it were valuable. The world wants just

such laborers as God thrusts into his vineyard; he knows what qualifications are necessary, and he will impart them."

The two brethren went to Conference, and had a refreshing time. Brother Sangers became as clay in the hands of the potter, and was melted and remolded into a vessel to bear the name of Christ to the lost world. In the love-feast he arose and praised God, and announced his determination to spend and be spent in his service, and all the people said "Amen."

Brother Sangers is yet in the itinerancy. He handles his Gospel implements as he used to his farming tools, without gloves; and some complain that they are too "sharp," and others that they are too "blunt," but on the whole they do good service, and we have no doubt that the great Master of the vineyard approves them.

His gentle wife is still by his side, smiling and rosy, and no one but she mistrusts that she is in the least unfit for her station.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.—1 KINGS xx, 11.

READER, the simple but truthful events recorded in this narrative are incidents collected from the past. The wheel of ever-present time has rolled them behind, but the system which they delineate still exists; and it remains to decide whether or not, with God's blessing, it shall prosper in days to come.

We have endeavored to give a life-like picture, well aware that to the human understanding in its native short-sightedness it is dark and gloomy. In contemplating the foreground scenery—the sad realities of the present, it loses sight of the beauty in the background—the glory of the distant future. But to the regenerate mind, and scanned by the eye of faith, the brightness, though obscured, is visible, and the rainbow of the everlasting covenant illumines the darkest cloud.

Would you know more of the itinerant whose life and character we have endeavored to portray; that godly man who threw his *all* into the work; he who suffered privation, want, and even hungerings in your midst for Christ's sake? Where is he?

The church walls of New England no longer echo to his manly, fearless voice: Is he sleeping beside the grave of his beloved wife or honored mother? Let us visit them.

Is there a fresher, newer mound beside the maternal tomb at Mount Joy? Not there is Walter Willard! Has he at last found a resting-place beside the wife of his bosom? Nay, he is not there!

The winds of the Atlantic fan the brow of many living, and howl their dirges over many that are dead, but *he* has left their haunts to make him a grave where they can never come.

Reader, would you visit him once more? Then go at sunset, when the shadows are deepening into shade, and dews from heaven are falling, and follow the fast receding sunbeam

over rivers and mountains to the distant shores of the Pacific.

In a sequestered corner of a church-yard in one of those thriving western cities, and apart from the towering tombstones that cluster over the graves of the rich and honored of this world, stands a plain slab of marble, marking by its limited dimensions the resting-place of some humble stranger. So unobtrusive is it that the careless observer turns away to more imposing monuments; consequently it is seldom visited, and stands in its seclusion almost hidden from view by the tall, untrodden grass around it.

But should some curious graveyard frequenter part the waving summer verdure, and near that neglected stone, he would find the following inscription:

Sacred to the Memory of the
R E V. W A L T E R W I L L A R D,

A METHODIST ITINERANT, AND MEMBER OF — CONFERENCE.

Seeking the boon of health, he fell in a strange land,
and strangers wept over his grave.

And so the pilgrim and warrior is at last at rest. He has put off his armor, and gone to reap the laurels won in an arduous fight.

And not at that lone grave would we part with thee, gentle reader; thou who hast walked by our side through the lights and shades of itinerant life couldst never find the sequel of the itinerant in that mystic sleep of death. With the hand of faith let us lift the vail that divides us from the loved and lost of this world, and there find the final sequel of Gospel effort. Behold it in the records of heaven, the Lamb's book of life, where is written not only the spiritual birth-place of immortal souls, but the name of him by whom they believed; and not only so, but each diadem of glory is radiant with those jewels gathered from the children of the world. They too have shed their little light in their own sphere, and perchance have lighted others to the great Source of all light. How the circle enlarges as we follow Christian influence! a small pebble thrown in the waters to ripple a broad surface; a little

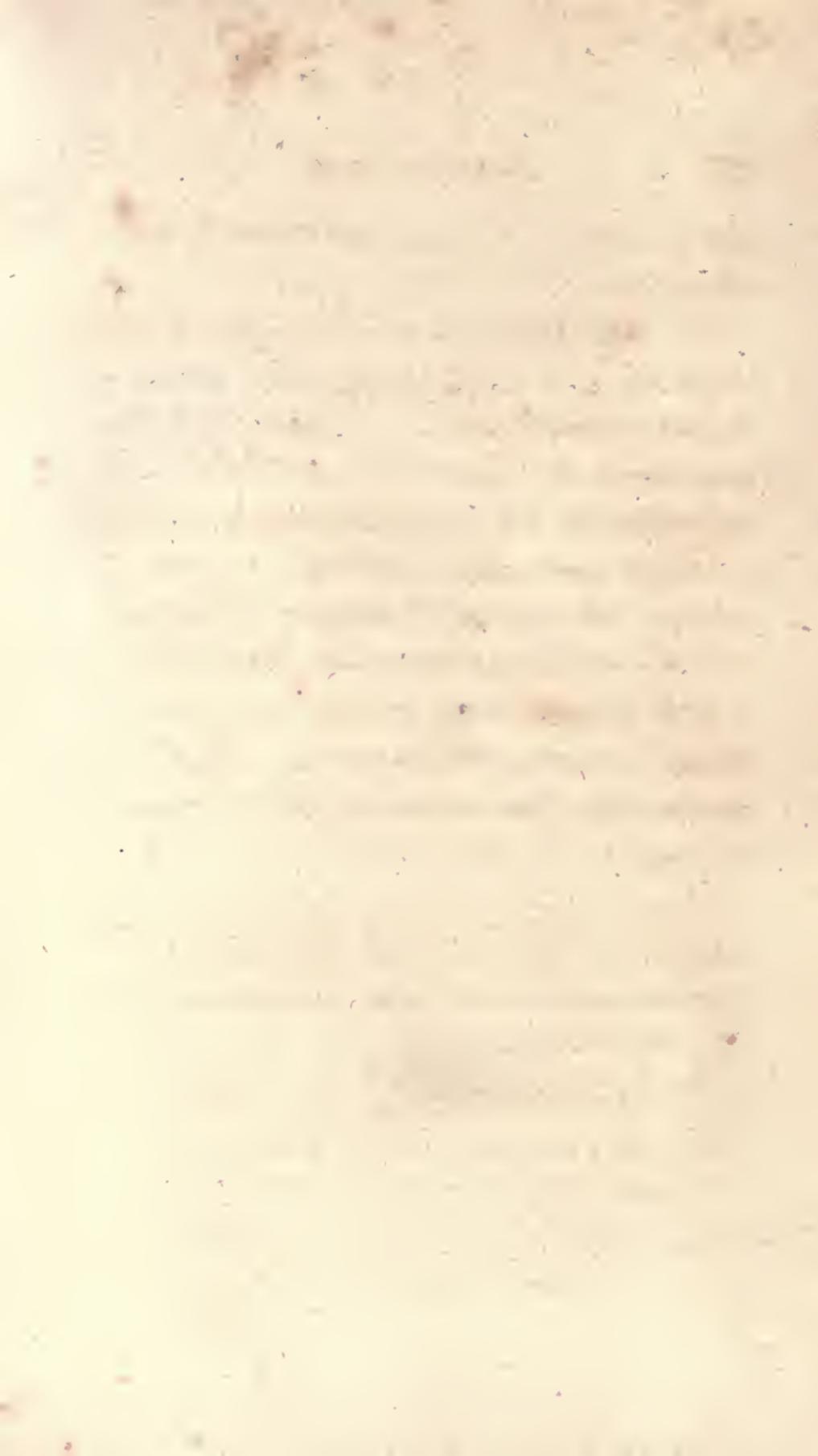
hidden leaven, and lo! the whole lump is leavened.

Homesick Christian, when the cares of life are pressing hard upon you indulge a blissful vision of those things; in imagination visit the new Jerusalem where God and angels dwell; away through the blue ether, far from earth and earth's attraction, hold converse with the blessed, for there is your home, and though thy pathway through life lies beneath the rainbow, it gives promise of a fair morrow; and though the partners of thy toilsome journey one after another pass behind the vail, they await you there.

And vainly the wave the traveler shall mock;
Still we smile at the barrier, the desert and rock;
We shall meet when the mists shall have pass'd from
the shore,

When the wave rolls up in its madness no more:
In the far, glorious heaven our kindred we'll claim,
Where the loved and the lost are united again.

THE END.



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